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# MEMOIR

## OF THE POLITICAL LIFE

### OF THE RIGHT HON.

# EDMUND BURKE.

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# MEMOIR

OF THE

# POLITICAL LIFE OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

# EDMUND BURKE;

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS WRITINGS.

"Burke, the greatest of political philosophers."

SIR J. MACKINTOSH.

BY

GEORGE CROLY, LL.D.

RECTOR OF ST STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK, LONDON.

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## CHAPTER I.

Burke's Letters to Mercer--Robbery of the Church of France—Remarks on the Constitutional Society—Burke's Character of Cromwell.

THE publicity of Burke's opinions entailed on him a vast variety of correspondence, frequently frivolous and captious; but even this correspondence assisted that knowledge which his whole life had been spent in cultivating, the knowledge of the public mind. To one of these volunteer writers, an obscure person, of the name of Mercer, who addressed him from that seat of republican politics, the north of Ireland, we probably owe some portions of his great work on the Revolution. This person, with the fearlessness of ignorance, had ventured to take Burke to task for his Parliamentary opinions on France, and with only inferior effrontery had proposed his own. But the letter was

turned to value by the manly intelligence of the mind which it was intended to convert, or to confound. It was assumed as a fair statement of the opinions circulating among the middle order of the vain, half-taught, and presumptuous politicians of a day, when every idler was a politician; and Burke's answer to the writer shows not only the clear views which he had already formed on public rights, but the strong attention which he felt due to every echo of the national clamour. Some of his correspondent's letters, too, may be useful to the present race of rectifiers of all things human. It will show, how destitute of novelty are all their topics, and even their phrases; how solemnly England was pronounced to be *undone*, half a century ago; how lightly the prospect of general overthrow was contemplated, and with what perfect identity of language the pretence of purification then served to cloak the working of principles which were so soon to burst out in bloodshed and plunder. After a few vague sentences, the letter proceeds to state the general surprise at the imputation of sentiments in Burke, "exceedingly inimical to what was thought by many a most *glorious revolution* in France. The newspapers represent you, sir, as complaining that the National Assembly had totally subverted their ancient form of Government, and that they had also subverted their Church. To complain of the subversion of a Government, implies a belief of its having been a good one. The word Government never had a place in my mind, when I considered the condition of the French people. In a word, *I* saw no-

thing but the most despotic tyranny, the subversion of which I thought would give the most sincere pleasure to every lover of civil liberty, of whatever nation he might be."

The Church, that universal theme of all the shallow, on which every haranguer is eloquent and endless; which every adventurer thinks himself entitled to rob, every profligate to reform, and every sciolist to treat with contumely; the Church of England, (under the affectation of discussing the crimes of the Church of France,) comes under this reformer's especial supervision. "With respect," says he, "to the subversion of the Church, it does not appear that any change in its doctrine has been attempted. In its discipline, there may be some alterations; it is probable that the National Assembly will enlarge those exemptions from the jurisdiction of Rome which it formerly enjoyed. For the rest—if to take from pampered and luxurious prelates a part of those sumptuous livings which were accumulated in the times of ignorance and superstition, and *to provide for the more comfortable subsistence of parish priests*, be the subversion of a Church, millions of good men and good Christians will heartily wish, for the honour of true religion, distinct from pageantry and hypocrisy, that all such may in this manner be speedily subverted."

Of this calibre were the pretexts held out by the National Assembly for their determination on the fate of the National Church. There was to be a reform; but no injury of the slightest kind was to be permitted

by the system itself; there perhaps might be "some little interference with the revenues of the Church," but it was to be merely for the purpose of an approach to an *equalization* of income in its pastors. The "working clergy" were at last to be taken under the wing of the State; the revenues "subducted from the *overgrown* abbots and bishops, were to be rigidly applied to the comfort and respectability of the learned, laborious, and long-ill-treated body of the parish priesthood." Who but must congratulate the country on so beneficial a change, who but must praise the Legislature for so pure, generous, and wise a regard for the state of the inferior clergy, and sympathize with the natural delight and gratitude which the clergy must feel in discovering their cause to be so feelingly adopted by the same great Assembly which had regenerated their country!

Before a year was over, from the time of those high-flown declarations, which threw this letter-writer, and the headlong fools who shared his follies, into ecstasy; the French Legislature gave their practical interpretation of Church improvement. They equalized the Church revenues—by seizing on the whole property of the Establishment. They curtailed the pomps and vanities of a "few overgrown bishops,"—by murdering or banishing all. They provided for the comfort and respectability of the parish clergy, by shooting them by hundreds, and exiling them by thousands. They purified, strengthened, and regenerated the Establishment,—by levelling it to the dust; first pro-

faning its places of worship with the most infamous scenes of licentiousness, and then giving them over for barracks to the soldiery, stripping the dead in their vaults for lead to cast into bullets, and burning the bodies in a funeral pile made of the ruins!

The remainder of the epistle is equally instructive. "Power over our fellow-men," says this reformer, "by whatever means it has been acquired, seems to be considered as man's dearest birthright,—he extends it from object to object, until the yoke becomes too heavy to be longer borne. And by what means are the aggrieved to get rid of it? Not by the most humble and abject intercessions, for both would be equally laughed to scorn; not by an appeal to the laws of the country, for the laws were made under the influence of the power complained of, and with a view to its perpetuation. There is therefore no *remedy to be found*, but in what is called a revolution; the intention of which being either to curtail or annul, or place in other hands the powers which be, it cannot be effected without *some convulsion;* nor is it possible so to order the matter, but in some cases many individuals may suffer injury and outrage; and this, so far as it goes, is to be lamented. But if it ends in freedom, in the deliverance of a nation from the despotism of one man, *no price can be thought too dear to pay for it.*"

This language has its importance, from its perfect similitude to the language which has become vernacular among the multitude, and the low culprits and sensual hypocrites by whom that multitude is led, at

the present hour. The whole tribe of those enlighteners and purifiers, who would enlighten with the firebrand and purify with the pike, use the verbiage of this busy politician, word for word. Like him, they assume that all power *must be* selfish and tyrannical; that a King must be a traitor to his trust; that law must be only a contrivance for cloaking oppression; that every species of public pressure justifies rebellion; that there is no cure for any species of misgovernment but rebellion; and that, in resistance to the Sovereign, there is to be no calculation of the ruin which that resistance may bring upon the people. Every proposition of the whole being equally rash, trifling, and mischievous; giving the trial of government into the hands of the ignorant, that its power may be given into the hands of the corrupt; making the populace judges of the nation, and the nation the prey of the demagogue; *compelling* the King to be a tyrant by the perpetual sense of insecurity, and urging the people to bloodshed by a perpetual regimen of inflammation. The decisive answer to the absurdities of political regenerators fifty years ago was the French Revolution, the popular tribunal flowing with blood, the universal massacre of the higher ranks, the universal misery of the lower, the final, remorseless bondage of the country. God avert the omen, and protect our country from thus shewing the bloody fallacy of political regeneration by the multitude!

We are still told, in the same words, that no sacrifices are too great for liberty. We still find the same

utter scorn of enquiry into the degree of liberty which we possess, or which we want. We are still called on to follow a phantom, without the slightest retrospect to the substantial form of freedom which we leave in the pursuit. And while words thus usurp the place of things, we set out on a chase of freedom, as the Indian sets out in pursuit of a new settlement; his first step abandons all that he had ever possessed before, and his next sees him bivouacking under the naked heaven. But even the Indian is not compelled to purchase his progress by carnage. The regenerator contemplates civil war as one of the simple incidents of his career; and every foot of ground that he gains is to be under carcasses. Every privilege, wild or wanton as it may be, must first be bartered for by a long course of general privation and popular excess.—Men *must* be slain, and provinces ravaged. They are nothing in the account. The whole extent of public life shaken, and private life devastated, are the current coin paid down by the trafficker in liberty, with the calm philosophy of one, to whom the beings who suffer are but the dust of the balance in which this tremendous commodity is weighed. The French Revolution has passed away, but passed like the thunderbolt, its track still cleft through the soil of Europe, and the smoke still rising from its furrows; and yet we are to be told that no price is too high for such liberty as France claimed for her portion, and as the haranguers of English revolt once hailed for the new birth of Empire.

Burke's reply to this letter was prompt and plain.

He had some slight previous intercourse with its writer; and his language, naturally courteous, was, in this instance, even kind. But his public sentiments were worthy of a mind which had fixed itself to live by the truth, and, to the last, break down all the subterfuges of political empiricism.—"If you are mistaken," said he, "it is, perhaps, owing to the various careless conversations in which we are engaged through life; conversations in which those who propagate their doctrines have not been called on for much reflection concerning their tendency. *I* am obliged to *act*, and am therefore bound to call my principles to a strict account. As far as my share of a public trust goes, I am in *trust* religiously to maintain the rights and properties of all descriptions of people in the possession which legally they hold, and in the *rule* by which alone they can be legally secure in any possession. The calling men by the names of 'pampered and luxurious prelates,' &c. is in you no more than a mark of your dislike to intemperance and idle expense, but in others it is used for other purposes. It is often used *to extinguish the sense of justice* in our minds, and the *natural feelings of humanity* in our bosoms. Such language does not mitigate the cruel effects of reducing men of opulent condition, and their innumerable dependents, to the last distress. If I were to adopt the plan of *spoliatory* reformation, I should probably employ such language; but it would aggravate, instead of extenuating my guilt, in overturning the *sacred principles of property*.

"Sir, I say that Church and State, and *human so-*

*ciety too*, for which Church and State were made, are subverted by such doctrines, joined to such practices, as leave no foundation for property in *long possession*. It is not my calling the use you make of your plate in your house, whether of dwelling or of prayer, 'pageantry and hypocrisy,' that can justify me in taking from you your own property, and your own liberty to use your own property according to your own ideas of ornament. When you find me attempting to break into your house to take your plate, under any pretence whatsoever, but, most of all, under pretence of purity, of religion and Christian charity, shoot me for a robber and a hypocrite, which in that case I shall certainly be. The 'true Christian religion,' never taught me any such practices; nor did the religion of nature; nor any religion, nor any law. Let those who never abstained from a full meal and as much wine as they could swallow, for a single day of their whole lives, satirize 'luxurious and pampered prelates' if they will. But there are occasions when the language of Falstaff reproaching the Londoners, whom he robbed in their way to Canterbury, with their gorbellies and their city luxury, is not so becoming.

"It is not calling the landed estates, possessed by old prescriptive rights, the 'accumulations of ignorance and superstition,' that can support me in shaking that grand title, which *supersedes all other title*, and which all my studies of general jurisprudence have taught me to consider as one principal cause of the formation of states; I mean the ascertaining and securing

of *prescription*. But those are 'donations made in ages of ignorance and superstition.' Be it so. It proves that those donations were made long ago; and this is *prescription*, and this *gives right and title*. I will never suffer you, if I can help it, to be deprived of the well-earned fruits of your industry, because others may want your fortune more than you do. Nor, on the contrary, if success had less smiled on your labours, and you had come home insolvent, would I take from any 'pampered and luxurious' lord in your neighbourhood one acre of his land, or one spoon from his sideboard, to compensate your losses, though incurred (as they would have been incurred) in the course of a well-spent, virtuous, and industrious life. God is the distributor of his own blessings. I will not impiously attempt to usurp His throne. I am a determined foe to tyranny; and it is because I am, and mean to continue so, that I abominate the example of France for this country. I know that tyranny seldom attacks the poor; never in the first instance. They are not its proper prey. It falls on the wealthy and the great, whom by rendering objects of envy, and likewise obnoxious to the multitude, it may more easily destroy, and when they are destroyed, that multitude which was led to that ill work by the hands of bad men, is itself undone for ever."

We are to remember that this powerful reprobation of robbery, under the pretence of public virtue, was used in the year 1790, when all the world was ringing with applauses of the National Assembly, when

its proceedings were still comparatively pure, and when every step of the Revolution was measured with the gravity of a priestess advancing to the shrine. But, even then, Burke saw the long atrocities which were meditated under that formal homage to the principles of a purified government. He saw the dagger already clutched under the robe; he could point out even in that grave and decorous tread, the sudden starts and impetuous impulses which shewed the fiery hypocrite, and which were so soon to bear her with the rapidity of madness through all the heights and depths of irredeemable crime. "I hate tyranny!" he exclaims, with a force becoming the feeling. "I hate tyranny. But I hate it worst of all where *most are concerned in it.* The tyranny of a multitude is a multiplied tyranny. As much injustice and tyranny has been practised in a few months, by a French democracy, as in all the arbitrary monarchies of Europe in the forty years of my observation."

The following fragment should be written on the chamber walls of every man, who, with honest intentions, (if that be possible,) revolves the question of Republicanism. "I go the full length of my principle. I should think the government of the deposed King of France, or of the late King of Prussia, or the present Emperor, or the present Czarina, none of them perhaps perfectly good people, to be *far better* than the government of twenty-four millions of men, all *as good as you*, and I do not know any body better; supposing that those four-and-twenty millions would be subject,

as infallibly they would, to the same unrestrained, though virtuous impulses; because it is plain that the majority would think themselves justified by their *good intentions*,—they would heat one another by their common zeal. Counsel and advice would be lost upon them. They would not listen to temperate individuals, and they would be less capable, infinitely, of moderation than the most heady of those princes."

At the close of 1789, Burke had written a letter (in this letter are to be found the germs of the famous "Reflections") of some length to M. de Menonville, a member of the National Assembly, who had applied to him for his conceptions on French affairs. It was probably to this individual that the rough draft of the volume on the Revolution was addressed. Every incident on the subject of such a work is interesting. His own statement is, that the "Reflections" had their origin in a correspondence between their author and a very young gentleman of Paris, who desired his opinion upon the public transactions. An answer was written in October, 1789. The correspondence was continued. "The author began a second and more full discussion on the subject. This he had some thoughts of publishing early in the spring; but the matter gaining on him, he found that what he had undertaken, not only far exceeded the measure of a letter, but that its importance required rather a more detailed consideration than at that time he had any leisure to bestow upon it. However, having thrown his first thoughts into the form of a letter, and indeed, when he

sat down to write, having intended it for a private letter, he found it difficult to change the form of address when his sentiments had grown into a greater extent, and had received another direction."

The chief cause of this change of purpose had probably been the open breach which had occurred between him and Sheridan in the debate of February 1790; and the qualified hostility which had commenced about the same period on the part of Fox. He felt called on, by a sense of self-respect, to prove that he had adopted the true views of the public interests; if not still more by his strong sense of duty, to warn the nation against hazards, which had become so much more hazardous by being taken under the patronage of the great popular favourites of the time. He thenceforth applied with redoubled force that mind, which always accomplished all that it conceived, to clear away the artifices of the crafty, the errors of the weak, and the illusions of the enthusiastic; to extinguish the false light in the lustre of the true. The general principles of the "Reflections" have been already stated.

His volume begins with easy but powerful sarcasm on the "Constitutional Society," a knot of nameless zealots who had first figured as abettors of disturbance in England, and then sent a deputation to "fraternize" with the levellers in France. Their affectation of treating public questions in the abstract is among the first objects of his chastisement. "I cannot stand forward," says he, "and give praise or blame to any thing which relates to human actions and human concerns,

on a simple view of the subject, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction. Circumstances, in reality, give to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. Can I now congratulate France on her freedom? Is it because liberty in the abstract is among the blessings of mankind, that I am seriously to felicitate a madman, who has escaped from the protecting restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell, on his restoration to the enjoyment of light and liberty?

"Am I to congratulate a highwayman and murderer, who has broke prison, on the recovery of his natural rights? This would be to act over again the scene of the criminals condemned to the galleys and their heroic deliverer, the metaphysic Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance. When I see the spirit of liberty in action, I see a strong principle at work, and this, for a while, is all that I can possibly know of it. The wild gas, the fixed air, is plainly broke loose, but we ought to suspend our judgment until the first effervescence has subsided, and we see something deeper than the agitation of a frothy and troubled surface. I should, therefore, suspend my congratulations on the new liberty of France; until I was informed how it had been combined with government, with public force, with the discipline and obedience of armies, with the collection of an effectual and well-distributed revenue, with morality and religion, with stability and property, with peace and order, with civil and social

manners. All those, in their way, are good things too; and without them, liberty is not a benefit while it lasts, and is not likely to continue long. The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they please; we ought to see *what it will please them to do*, before we risk congratulations, which may soon be turned into complaints. Prudence would dictate this in the case of separate, insulated, private men. But liberty, when men act in bodies, is *power*. * * * * * * All circumstances taken together, the French Revolution is the most astonishing that has hitherto happened in the world; the most wonderful things are brought about by means the most absurd, in the most ridiculous modes, and by the most contemptible instruments. Every thing seems out of nature in this strange chaos of levity and ferocity, and of all sorts of crimes jumbled together with all sorts of follies. In viewing this monstrous tragicomic scene, the most opposite passions necessarily succeed, and sometimes mix with each other in the mind, alternate contempt and indignation, alternate laughter and tears, alternate scorn and horror."

It was one of the perpetual calumnies against the author that he was a friend to abuses. He was, in every period of his life, an advocate for the extinction of all abuses. His first political efforts were on the side of public purification. His first great Parliamentary measure, a measure which by its labour astonished Parliament, not more than by the boldness with which it was enforced, was a general plan of re-

formation. His advice even to the French nation was reform; but reform in the spirit of renovation, not of overthrow. "Had you resumed," says he, "your ancient privileges while you preserved the spirit of your ancient loyalty; or, if diffident of yourselves, and not clearly discerning the almost obliterated constitution of your ancestors, you had looked to your neighbours in this land; by following these examples you would have given new examples of wisdom to the world. You would have rendered the cause of liberty venerable; you would have shamed despotism from the earth, by showing that freedom was not only reconcilable, but, as when well disciplined, it is auxiliary to law. You would have had a free constitution, a potent monarchy, a disciplined army, a mitigated, but spirited nobility, to lead your virtue, not to overlay it; you would have had a liberal order of commons to emulate and recruit that nobility. You would have had a protected, satisfied, laborious, and obedient people, taught to seek and recognise the happiness that is to be found by virtue in all conditions; *in which consists the true equality of mankind*, and not in that monstrous fiction, which, by inspiring false ideas and vain expectations into men destined to travel in the obscure walk of laborious life, serves only to aggravate and embitter that *real inequality which it never can remove*, and which the order of civil life establishes, as much for the benefit of those whom it must leave in a humble state, as those whom it is able to exalt to a condition more splendid but not more happy. * * * * *

Compute your gains. See what is got by those extravagant and presumptuous speculations, which have taught your leaders to despise all their predecessors and all their contemporaries. By following these false lights, France has bought undisguised calamities at higher price than any nation has purchased the most unequivocal blessings. France has bought poverty by crime. France has not sacrificed her virtue to her interest, she has abandoned her interest that she might prostitute her virtue. All other nations have begun the fabric of a new government by establishing some rites of religion. All other people have laid the foundations of civil freedom in a system of more masculine morality. But France, when she let loose the reins of regal authority, doubled the license of a ferocious dissoluteness in manners, and of an insolent irreligion in opinions and practices. France, by the perfidy of her leaders, has utterly disgraced the tone of lenient council in the cabinets of princes. She has sanctified the dark suspicious maxims of tyrannous distrust, and taught kings to tremble at what will hereafter be called the delusive plausibilities of moral politicians. Sovereigns will consider those who advise them to place an unlimited confidence in their people as subverters of their thrones. Remember, that your Parliament of Paris told your King, that in calling the States together, he had nothing to fear but the prodigal excess of their zeal in providing for the support of the throne."

The festive levity with which public subversion was

contemplated, and the sullen horrors with which it was accomplished, had given birth in his mind to the most consummate disgust for the national leaders. "Were all those dreadful things necessary," exclaims the writer, after a long enumeration of miseries and crimes; "were they the inevitable results of the desperate struggle of determined patriots, compelled to wade through blood and tumult to the quiet shore of a prosperous liberty? No, nothing like it. The fresh ruins of France which shock our feelings wherever we turn our eyes, are not the devastation of civil war; they are the sad but instructive monuments of rash and ignorant counsel in times of profound peace. The persons who have made this prodigal and wild waste of public evils, (the last stake for the ultimate redemption of the state,) have met in their progress with little, or rather no opposition at all. Their whole march was like a triumphal procession. Their pioneers have gone before them, and laid every thing level at their feet. Not one drop of *their* blood have they shed in the cause of the country they have ruined. They have made no sacrifices to their projects, of greater consequences than *their shoebuckles;* while they were imprisoning their king, murdering their fellow-citizens, and bathing in tears and plunging in poverty and distress, thousands of worthy men and worthy families. Their cruelty has not even been the base result of fear. It has been the effect of their sense of perfect safety in authorizing treasons, robberies, assassina-

tions, slaughters and burnings throughout their harassed land."

In all our estimates of popular legislation, one maxim is to be always kept in view, that we are to calculate its future proceedings, not from its best materials, but from its worst. For the worst will inevitably take the lead, in time. The course of the demagogue is plain; there are no intricacies in his path to power; the difficulties which retard the steps of men of honour in their way to the prizes of honourable fame, are not to be found in the downward road which leads to his distinctions; he has only to follow the law of descent, and his own gravitation carries him to the goal.

Burke, judging of the National Assembly on this principle, decided at once that its progress must be a perpetual degradation. By analyzing its contents, he showed that the most hazardous classes in France constituted its majority. Among those the lower members of the law were predominant; and his reasons for distrusting them as legislators are fully as applicable to every other country where they shall be suffered to crowd into the Legislature. "Who could flatter himself," he observes, "that men who are habitually meddling, daring, subtle, active, of litigious dispositions, and unquiet minds, would easily fall back into their old condition of obscure contention, and laborious, low, and unprofitable chicane? Who could doubt but that, at any expense to the state, of which they understood nothing, they must pursue their private interests, which they understood but too well? It was not an

event depending on contingency. It was inevitable. It was necessary; it was planted in the nature of things. They *must* join (if their capacity did not permit them to lead) in any project which could procure to them a *litigious constitution;* which could lay open to them those innumerable lucrative jobs, which follow in the train of all great convulsions in the state, and particularly in all great and violent permutations of property. * * * * Forbid it, that I should insinuate any thing derogatory to that profession, which is another priesthood, administering the rights of sacred justice. But while I revere men in the functions that belong to them, I cannot, to flatter them, give the lie to nature. Their very excellence in their peculiar functions may be far from a qualification for others. It cannot escape observation, that when men are too much confined to professional and faculty habits, they are rather disabled than qualified for whatever depends on the knowledge of mankind, on experience in mixed affairs, on a comprehensive view of the various complicated external and internal interests which go to the formation of that multifarious thing called a State."

In those remarks, the allusion was directly to the crowd of village lawyers, and other obscure and unprincipled members of the bar, in a country, where, as none but the great officials of the profession were held in any public esteem, the general character of the class was naturally lowered in its rank. The Bar in England justly stands in a superior place.

The unhappy feebleness of the noblesse in France

had now either sunk them into the power of the demagogues, or left them to hang as helpless incumbrances on the throne, which it was their station to uphold. But, in his strong animadversion upon these men, Burke evidently had other criminals in view; and his picture of the noble betrayers of their rank, had been sketched from individuals of no slight distinction among the haranguers of England.

"Turbulent, discontented men of quality, in proportion as they are puffed up with pride and arrogance, generally despise their own order. One of the first symptoms they discover of a selfish and mischievous ambition, is a profligate disregard of all dignity which they partake with others. To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle, the germ, as it were, of all public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love of our country and of mankind. The interest of that portion is a trust in the hands of all those who compose it, and as none but bad men would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it away for their personal advantage." He now swoops down upon the prey which he has so long had in view. "There were, in the time of our civil troubles in England, several persons, like the then Earl of Holland, who by themselves or their families had brought an odium on the throne, by the prodigal dispensation of its bounties towards them, and who afterwards joined in the rebellions arising from the discontents of which they themselves were the cause.

If any bounds are set to the rapacious demands of this sort of people, revenge and envy soon fill up the craving void left in their avarice. Confounded by the complication of distempered passions, their reason is disturbed, their views become vast and perplexed, to others inexplicable, to themselves uncertain. They find on all sides bounds to their unprincipled ambition in any fixed order of things. But in the fog and haze of confusion all is enlarged and appears without limit." Burke was here palpably holding up to national scorn the principles attributed at that period to Francis Duke of Bedford. The Russell family had grown by royal confiscations, and had long been obnoxious for this growth. The Duke, however, had suddenly broken off the old connexion of his family with public service, and figured at this period as a first-rate Tribune of the people. The penetration of the great writer could not have been mistaken in his estimate of that noble person's abilities; but he had seen too much of the evil that might be wrought by the example of birth and rank in the person of the profligate, vain, and feeble-minded Duke of Orleans, to find any security against his constitutional alarms in the nature of the Duke of Bedford's understanding.

The result, however, showed that he had misconceived the Duke's intentions. No man was more intensely aristocratic; no man less prepared for the extremities of overthrow. A childish popularity was the wooden idol before which the English peer bowed down. He cannot be supposed a convert to the more recondite doc-

trines. The mysteries of the shrine were still veiled to him. The deeper prostration and wilder orgies that belonged to the living image of all ferocity, erected upon the French altar, would probably have startled him too much, to be disclosed. He was simply a man of fashion, who, weary of indulgence in the vapid paths of luxury, sought for new excitement in the caprices of the multitude; knew nothing in the clamours of the populace, but their echo in the ears of party; and, in his harmless and sincere folly, was contented with the holiday parade of that turbid and fevered multitude which men of worse hearts, but bolder spirits and more masculine understandings, would have rejoiced to be marshalling for the field.

From sketching this outline of a lover of change, conspicuous only by the accidents of ancestry, Burke turns to characters more congenial, in all their nobler configuration, to the soaring and creative grandeur of his own mind. The pencil here but touches the canvass, but the touch is fire. "Other revolutions have been conducted by persons, who, while they attempted changes in the Commonwealth, *sanctified their ambition* by advancing the dignity of the people, whose peace they troubled. They had long views. They aimed *at the rule*, not at the destruction of their country. They were men of great civil and great military talents; and if the terror, the ornament of their age, they were not like Jew brokers contending with each other who could best remedy with fraudulent circulation and depreciated paper, the wretchedness and ruin brought

upon their country by their degenerate counsels. The compliment paid to one of the great bad men of the old stamp, Cromwell, by his kinsman, a favourite poet of the time, shows what it was he proposed, and what, indeed, to a great degree he accomplished in the success of his ambition—

> ' Still, as *you* rise, the *State*, exalted too,
> Finds no distemper, while 'tis changed by *you*.
> Changed, like the World's great scene, when, without noise,
> The rising Sun night's vulgar light destroys !'

" Those disturbers were not so much like men usurping power, as asserting their natural place in society. Their rising was to illuminate and beautify the world. Their conquest over their competitors was by outshining them. The hand, that like a destroying angel smote the country, *communicated to it the force and energy under which it suffered.* I do not say (Heaven forbid) that the virtues of such men were to be taken as a balance to their crimes; but they were some corrective of their effects. Such was our Cromwell. Such were your whole race of Guises, Condes, and Colignis. Such the Richlieus, who in more quiet times acted in the spirit of a civil war. Such, as better men and in a less dubious cause, were your Henry the Fourth, and your Sully, though nursed in civil confusions, and not without some of their taint. It is a thing to be wondered at, to see how very soon France, when she had a moment to respire, recovered and emerged from the longest and

most dreadful civil war that was ever known in any nation. Why? because, in all their massacres, they had not slain the *mind* in their country. A conscious dignity, a noble pride, a generous sense of glory and emulation was not extinguished. On the contrary, it was kindled and inflamed. The organs, also, of the state, however shattered, existed. All the prizes of honour and virtue, all the rewards, all the distinctions remained."

## CHAPTER II.

Clubs in England—Dr Price—Memorable description of the Queen of France.

The clamour of the time, as it has been renewed among ourselves, was that the great quality for representation was personal talent. The wild plea for change in the Legislature was,—why is sluggish property to place a merely honest senator in that seat which should be filled only by distinguished ability? Why keep the doors of Parliament shut to the free circulation of that intellect which comes up so perpetually renewed, from the open expanse of the public mind? The answer is obvious. Let *both* be represented.

But, let us hear the words of wisdom again from the true oracle, "As ability is a vigorous and active principle, and as property is inert and timid, it can never be safe from the invasions of ability, unless it be, *out of all proportion, predominant* in the representation. It must be represented, too, in *great masses of accumulation*, or it is not rightly protected. The characte-

ristic essence of property is, to be *unequal.* The great masses, therefore, which excite envy and tempt rapacity must be put out of the possibility of danger. Then they form a *natural rampart about the lesser properties* in all their gradations. The same quantity of property divided among many, has not the same operation. Its defensive power is weakened as it is diffused. The plunder of the few would indeed give but a share inconceivably small in the distribution to the many. But the many are not capable of making this calculation, and those who lead them to rapine *never intend this distribution.* The power of perpetuating our property in our families, is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself. The possessors of family wealth, and of the distinction which attends hereditary possession, are, as most concerned in it, the *natural securities for this transmission.* With us the House of Peers is formed upon this principle. It is wholly composed of hereditary property and hereditary distinction, and made, therefore, the third of the Legislature, and, in the last event, the sole judge of all property in all its subdivisions."

The Clubs in England had insolently "congratulated" the country on this period, as auspicious for remaking the Constitution. "What," says he, indignantly; "is that course of liberty, and what are those exertions in its favour, to which the example of France is so singularly auspicious? Is every land-mark of

the country to be done away in favour of a geometrical and arithmetical Constitution? *Is the House of Lords to be voted useless? Is Episcopacy to be abolished? Are the Church-lands to be sold* to Jews and jobbers, or *given to bribe* new invented municipal republics into a participation in sacrilege? Are all the taxes to be voted grievances, and the revenue reduced to a patriotic contribution? Are the *Curates to be seduced from their Bishops*, by holding out to them the delusive hope of a dole *out of the spoils of their own order?* Are the citizens of London to be drawn from their allegiance, by feeding them at the expense of their fellow-subjects? Is a compulsory paper currency to be substituted in place of the legal coin of the kingdom? Is what remains of the plundered stock of public revenue to be employed in the wild project of maintaining two armies to watch over and to fight with each other?"

The "Rights of Man" were already the watchword of insurrection. Burke devotes himself to an enquiry into the *real* rights of man. The heads of this masterly dissertation can alone be given here; but the whole is worthy of being inscribed in whatever temple a grateful posterity shall yet erect to the wisdom that saved their fathers from ruin. "Far am I from denying in theory, full as far as any heart is from denying in practice, the real rights of man. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right; it is an institution of beneficence, and law itself is only beneficence

acting by a rule. Men have a *right* to live by that rule. They have a *right* to do justice. They have a *right* to the fruits of their own industry. They have a *right* to the acquisitions of their parents, to the nourishment and improvement of their offspring, to instruction in life, and to consolation in death. Whatever each man can separately do, *without trespassing upon others*, he has a *right* to do for himself, and he has a *right* to a fair portion of all which society can do in his favour. In this partnership all men have equal rights, but *not to equal things*. He who has but five shillings in the partnership has as good a right to it as he who has five hundred pounds; but he has *not* a right to an *equal dividend* in the product of the joint stock. As to the share of power which each individual ought to have in the management of the State, that I must deny to be among the rights of man. It is a thing to be settled by convention.

"If civil society be the offspring of convention, that convention must be its law. Every sort of legislature are its creatures. One of the first motives to civil society, and which becomes one of its fundamental rules, is, that *no man can be judge in his own cause*. By this, man abdicates *all right to be his own governor*. He, in a great measure, abandons even the right of self-defence, the first law of nature. Man cannot enjoy the rights of an *un*civil and a civil state together. That he may obtain general justice, he gives up his right of determining *what it is*, in points

the most essential to him. That he may secure some liberty, he makes a surrender *in trust* of the whole.

"Government is *not* made in virtue of *natural rights*. Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human *wants*. Among these wants is to be reckoned the want of a sufficient restraint upon their passions. Society *requires* that in the body and mass, as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can be done only by a power out of *themselves*, and not *subject* to that will and those passions which it is its office to bridle and subdue. In this sense, the *restraints* on man, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned among their rights.

"The moment you abate any thing from the full right of man, each to govern himself, from that moment the whole organization of government becomes a consideration of convenience. This it is which makes the constitution of a state a matter of the most delicate and complicated skill. It requires a deep knowledge of human nature and its necessities. What is the use of discussing a man's abstract right to food or medicine? The question is upon the method of procuring and administering them.

"The science of constructing a Commonwealth, or renovating it, or reforming it, is not to be taught *à priori*. The science of government being therefore so practical in itself, and intended for such practical purposes, being a matter which requires experience, and

even more experience than any person can gather in his whole life, however sagacious and observing he may be, it is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purposes of society; or on building it up again, without having models of approved utility before his eyes.

"The pretended rights of those theorists are all extreme. And in proportion as they are metaphysically true, they are politically false. The rights of men in Governments are their *advantages;* and those are often in balances between differences of good; in compromises sometimes between good and evil, and sometimes between evil and evil. By those theorists, the right of the people is sophistically confounded with their *power*. But, till power and right are the same, the whole body of the community has no right inconsistent with virtue, and the first of all political virtues, prudence. Men have *no right* to what is not reasonable, and to what is not for their benefit. * * * * * I never liked this continual talk of resistance and revolution, or the practice of making the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread. It renders the habit of society dangerously valetudinary; it is taking periodical doses of mercury sublimate, and swallowing down repeated provocations of cantharides to our love of liberty."

All this is unanswerable. The outcry of the multitude for political power is not merely beyond the rights

of man, but beyond the reason of things. Political power implies the general direction of States, and the disposal of the lives and properties of individuals. But are the multitude fit to decide on questions of peace and war, to regulate the commerce, or form the laws of a nation? Or are they fitter to decide on human life and human possessions? Reason, which dictates that the ploughman must be taught before he can turn the furrow, and the artificer must serve an apprenticeship; dictates with at least equal force, that the governors of a State, whether in the Legislature, the Cabinet, or the Palace, should have some previous knowledge of their duty. But they must have another qualification; they must be able, not only to show that they are adequate to their trust in point of knowledge, but in point of fidelity. They must be able to offer some pledge to the nation against the common insecurity of human faith, and this pledge can alone be *property;* for they must have sufficient anchorage in the solid possessions of society, to satisfy the nation that they will not shift their moorings at every breath of caprice or corruption; sufficient interest in the settled constitution of things to make change a serious loss to themselves; sufficient influence by their rank and means to oppose a certain barrier to the first heady impulse of popular folly. And this order of the Commonwealth works not less impartially in the general improvement of the national mind. Where political power demands education and property, those prices will be duly paid. The Commonwealth will not be a display of untamed

passion; habitual violence, and reckless retribution; of rude indulgence, insecure life, and death without use and without honour,—but a manly and intelligent assemblage, however clothed, or in various costumes, moving in various ranks, all advancing; none overstepping the other, but all forming a peaceable and majestic procession to the dome where Law and Religion sit side by side, answering the national homage by national blessing, and shedding some portion of their own lustre on every countenance turned towards them.

Burke's castigation of Dr Price has long been memorable, not more for its force and pungency of expression, than for its justice. Price was one of those men of mediocrity who might fill a place among mankind, without either attracting curiosity in their lives, or leaving a recollection of them behind, for good or ill. But great personal vanity, acting on a bitter spirit, and both inflamed by sectarianism, forbade him to be either passed by with good-natured neglect during his career, or laid without contempt in the grave, when his noisy and useless course was quieted at last. He was a Welshman, who, coming to London, was made the pastor of one of those unhappy assemblages, which, alike in contradiction to Scripture and common-sense, deny the divinity of our Lord. In such an office he had but little to employ his understanding; and in the intervals of detailing the absurd doctrines of Arianism, he occupied himself with not much more utility in writing pamphlets on "Morals," "Provi-

dence," &c.; all long since irrecoverable. Probably the disappointment of his authorship urged him to try his powers in a direction more fitted to his calibre. The subject of Funds, the National Debt, and other financial questions, had become important by the growing expenses of the country. He possessed some mathematical acquirements; and, about the year 1771, he produced "Observations on Reversionary Payments and Annuities," by which he obtained considerable credit. This was followed by a pamphlet on the National Debt. But those studies were too insipid for the natural turn of his mind. His lips languished, without the strong drink of popular tumult. Peevish politics, antinational prejudices, and an equally ignorant and vindictive passion for Republicanism, urged him to embroil himself in the troubled politics of the time. Of course, if such a writer touched the American question, it must have been on the side of America; and the pamphlet by which he was to throw Government into utter disgrace, and prove the tyranny of his country towards her immaculate offspring, was the work of an advocate as angry as he was blind. In this waste of understanding, and ebullition of disregarded wrath, he lived on, until the revolt in France cheered him by a new topic. But the pulpit was now the place of his effusions; and a sermon, preached at the Old Jewry, on "the Love of our Country," instantly signalized his zeal. The sanguinary violences which had already characterised the democrats of Paris, found no rebuke in the theology of the Arian divine.

On the contrary, he was all exultation. The display of popular vigour renovated his old age. He hailed the rising of the democracy as the "rising of a new luminary in the European system;" and hailed it with the more exultation for the misty magnitude and lurid disk that it borrowed from the carnage on the ground. Burke, indignant at this abuse of the place of prayer, —let it be called by what name it will,—seized him in the moment of his triumph, and inflicted on the feeble sophist so keen a retaliation, that it was said to have hastened his death. The scourge cut to the bone. Price died in April, 1791, a few months after the appearance of the "Reflections."

"This sort of people," says Burke, "are so taken up with their theories about the rights of man, that they have totally forgotten his nature. Without opening one avenue to the understanding, they have succeeded in stopping up all those that lead to the heart. This famous sermon of the Old Jewry breathes nothing but this spirit through all the political part. Plots, massacres, assassinations, seem to some people a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. A cheap, bloodless reformation,—a guiltless liberty, appears flat and insipid to their taste. There must be a great change of scene; there must be a magnificent stage effect; there must be a grand spectacle, to rouse the imagination, grown torpid with the lazy enjoyment of sixty years security, and the still, unanimating repose of public prosperity. The preacher found them all in the French Revolution: this inspires a juvenile warmth

through his whole frame. His enthusiasm kindles as he advances; and when he has reached his peroration it is in a full blaze. Then viewing from the Pisgah of his pulpit the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious state of France, as in a bird's-eye-landscape of a promised land, he breaks out into the following rapture:—'What an eventful period is this! I am *thankful* that I have lived to it. I could almost say,—*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!* I have lived to see a *diffusion* of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. I have lived to see the rights of men *better understood* than ever. I have lived to see thirty millions of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice,—*their king led in triumph*, and *an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects.*'

"Before I proceed further, I have to remark, that Dr Price seems rather to overvalue the great acquisitions of light which he has obtained and diffused in this age. The last century appears to me to have been quite as much enlightened. It had, though in a different place, a triumph as memorable as that of Dr Price; and some of the great preachers of that period partook of it as eagerly, as he has done of the triumph of France. On the trial of the Rev. Hugh Peters for high treason, it was deposed, that when King Charles was brought to London for his trial, the apostle of liberty in that day conducted the *triumph*. 'I saw,' says the witness, 'his Majesty in the coach with six horses,

and Peters riding before the King *triumphing.*' Dr Price, when he talks as if he had made a discovery, only follows a precedent; for, after the commencement of the King's trial, this precursor, the same Dr Peters, concluding a long prayer at the Royal Chapel at Whitehall, (he had very triumphantly chosen his place,) said, 'I have prayed and preached these twenty years, and now I may say, with old Simeon, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation! Peters had not the fruits of his prayer; for he neither departed so soon as he wished, nor did he depart in peace: he became (what I heartily hope none of his followers may be in this country) himself a sacrifice to the triumph which he led as pontiff. They dealt at the Restoration, perhaps, too hardly with this poor good man. But we owe it to his memory and his sufferings, that he had as much *illumination*, and as much zeal, and had as effectually undermined *all the superstition and error* which might impede the great business he was engaged in, as any who follow and repeat after him in this age.

"After this sally of the preacher of the Old Jewry, which differs only in place and time, but perfectly agrees with the spirit and letter of the rupture of 1648, The Revolution Society, the fabricators of Governments, the heroic band of *cashierers* of monarchs, electors of sovereigns, and leaders of kings in triumph, strutting with a proud consciousness of the diffusion of knowledge, of which every member had obtained

so large a share, were in haste to make a generous diffusion of the knowledge which they had thus gratuitously received. They adjourned from the church in the Old Jewry to the London Tavern, where the same Dr Price, in whom the fumes of his oracular tripod were not entirely evaporated, moved and carried the resolution, or address of congratulation, transmitted by Lord Stanhope to the National Assembly of France."

He finely and forcibly concludes this burst of scorn, with a few lines of grave condemnation, which must have sunk into the heart:—" I find a preacher of the Gospel profaning the beautiful and prophetic ejaculation made on the first presentation of our Saviour in the Temple, and applying it with an inhuman and unnatural rapture to the most horrid, atrocious, and afflicting spectacle that perhaps ever was exhibited to the pity and indignation of mankind. This *leading in triumph!* a thing in its best form unmanly and irreligious, which fills our preacher with such unhallowed transport, must shock, I believe, the moral taste of every well-born mind. * * * This was not the triumph of France. I must believe, that as a nation, it overwhelmed you with shame and horror. I must believe, that the National Assembly find themselves in a state of the greatest humiliation, in not being able to punish the authors of this triumph, or the actors in it. The apology of that Assembly is found in their situation; but when *we* approve, what they must bear, it is in us the *degenerate choice of a vitiated mind.* * *

* * * Those Theban and Thracian orgies, acted in France, and applauded only in the Old Jewry, kindle prophetic enthusiasm in the minds of but very few persons of this kingdom. Though a saint and apostle, who may have revelations of his own, and who has so completely vanquished all the mean superstitions of the heart, may incline to think it pious and decorous to compare it with the entrance into the world of the Prince of Peace, proclaimed in a holy temple by a venerable sage, and not long before announced by the voice of angels to the quiet innocence of shepherds."

"I was at first at a loss," says Burke of this Sermon, "to account for this fit of unguarded transport. I knew, indeed, that the sufferings of monarchs make a delicious repast to some palates. There were reflections which might serve to keep this appetite within some bounds of temperance. But when I took one circumstance into my consideration, I was obliged to confess, that much allowance ought to be made for the Society, and that the temptation was too strong for common discretion. I mean the circumstance of the Io Pœan of the triumph. The animating cry which called for '*All the Bishops to be hanged on the lamp-posts!*' might well have brought forth a burst of enthusiasm on the foreseen consequences of this happy day. I allow this prospect to break forth into hymns of joy and thanksgiving on an event which appears like the precursor of the Millennium, the projected fifth monarchy, in the destruction of all Church establishments. There was, however, as in all human affairs there is,

in the midst of this joy, something to exercise the patience of those worthy gentlemen. The actual murder of the king and queen, and their child, was wanting to the other auspicious circumstances of this *beautiful day*. The actual murder of the bishops, though called for by so many holy ejaculations, was also wanting. A group of regicidal and sacrilegious slaughter was indeed boldly sketched, but it was only sketched. It unhappily was left unfinished in this great history-piece of the massacre of the Innocents. What hardy pencil of a great master, from the school of the Rights of Man, will finish it, is to be seen hereafter.

The conjecture was soon and deplorably justified. The King, whom France still proclaimed to be the legitimate Monarch, and placed under the inviolable safeguard of the constitution, was already marked for death in the Councils that domineered over the time-serving spirit of the National Assembly. In reading the prediction, we seem to be reading the history. The 6th of October, 1790, that day which the inhuman and infamous exultation of the conspirators against this country had called *un beau jour*, had shewed him the Sovereign dragged from his palace. His feelings on this appalling event gush out in a torrent of noble wrath and generous sorrow, which, at the time, fixed all hearts in admiration of the writer; and which, while a sense of pity and eloquence subsists in the world, will live among the finest bursts of genius. In his celebrated lament over the Queen of France he says,—"I hear, and I rejoice to hear, that the great lady, the

other object of this *triumph !* has borne that day, (one is interested that beings made for suffering should suffer well,) and that she bears all the succeeding days, that she bears the imprisonment of her husband, and her own captivity, and the exile of her friends, and the exulting adulation of addresses, and the whole weight of her accumulated wrongs, with a serene patience, in a manner suited to her rank and race, and becoming the offspring of a Sovereign distinguished for her piety and courage.

" It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles, and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she had just begun to move in —glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy ! Oh ! what a revolution ! And what a heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall. Little did I dream, that when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace, concealed in that bosom. Little did I dream, that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men,—in a nation of men of honour and cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone ; that of sophisters, economists, and

calculators, has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone. It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound; which inspired courage, while it mitigated ferocity; which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which, vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness!

"This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry. And the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced, through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in. It is this, which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this, which has distinguished it under all its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage, from the States of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the Antique World. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion, which mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force or opposition it subdued the fierceness of pride and power, it obliged

sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a domination vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners.

" But now, all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new, conquiring empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off; all the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion. On this scheme of things, a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal, and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father, is only common homicide !"

The consequences of finally extinguishing the principle of honour in France were predicted with equal clearsightedness. " When the old feudal and chival-

rous spirit of *fealty*, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men; plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and by that long roll of grim and bloody maxims which form the political code of all power not standing on its own honour, and the honour of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy, when subjects are rebels from principle."

The illustration of those profound views was to be rapidly given by the Republic. Its jailers were its governors; the reign of terror succeeded the abandonment of allegiance. The axe became the substitute for the sceptre; until France, wearied by civil murder, threw herself at the feet of despotism; and the regicide took refuge in the chain of the most lawless and malignant tyranny that ever insulted the hopes, or trampled on the privileges, of man.

## CHAPTER III.

The Democracy—Fate of the Philosophic Infidels—Death of Bailly —Death of Condorcet.

All history is but a romance, unless it is studied as an example. The miseries of the fathers are for the warning of the children; and the ruin of the man or the nation which will take no lesson from experience will only be more sudden, fatal, and returnless, than that which has already given the disregarded moral of the grave. There is a solemn appeal to the wisdom of England, in the evidence that the French monarchy perished solely by party. In a time of profound peace, in the general flourishing of every resource and every class of the kingdom, with a remarkable absence of public burdens, with no financial difficulties but those which the opulence of the nation could have thrown off, as dewdrops from the lion's mane; with an unbroken military and naval force, with a population exceeding in activity, dexterity, and general acquirement, all others in Europe, not then excepting

even our own; France, possessing every material of foreign and domestic power, the chief monarchy of the Continent, fell into instantaneous ruin. As if the ground had been hollowed under her,—the throne went down from the eyes of Europe.—As if some sudden decree of Heaven had commissioned the sword against all that retained the impress of birth, honour, and learning in the land, all was cut away even with the surface. It is remarkable that in this decisive vengeance, all the great habitual agencies of public destruction were kept aloof. Pestilence, famine, and war, were chained up; the ruin was left to be wrought by party; and from whatever source the commission came, whether from the wrath of Providence, or the malignity of the enemy alike of Heaven and man, it was found terribly equal to do the work of them all. The leading principle was selfishness, and the leading pretext a zeal for the populace. The system consisted of nothing but a reversal of all the maxims of human experience, for the purpose of a reversal of the whole order of human society. Its chiefs, contemptuous of morals, avowed themselves the champions of rights. Abasing all the privileges belonging to centuries of public service, of opulence, and high hereditary recollections, they exalted meanness, poverty, and ignorance; exclaiming against the luxury, feebleness, and prodigality of the first ranks of the state, they pampered the vices, the indolence, and the rapine of the crowd; offering an ostentatious homage to the law, they stimulated the people to its open violation; pro-

claiming themselves the heralds of a new triumph of peace, they turned its temple into a charnel. It is cheering to the sacred sense of justice to know that this labour had its reward; that the hypocrites themselves felt the first vengeance of their own delusions; that, after years employed in laying the mine under the monarchy of France, the moment in which they applied the match was the moment of their own extinction; the blast which tore up the foundations of society, shattered themselves into dust and ashes, and left of their ambition but an ignominious and abhorred name.

Hypocrisy is of all vices the most hateful to man; because it combines the malice of guilt with the meanness of deception. Of all vices, too, it is the most dangerous; because its whole machinery is constructed on treachery through the means of confidence, on compounding virtue with vice, on making the noblest qualities of our nature minister to the most profligate purposes of our ruin. It erects a false light where it declares a beacon, and destroys by the very instrument blazoned as a security. The French Revolution was the supreme work of hypocrisy. All its leaders were low and licentious villains, slaves of the basest propensities nurtured by the most criminal habits. We can detect nothing in them, to this hour, that belongs even to the higher failings of our nature,—not even a generous self-delusion, not even a wandering enthusiasm for the good of man, not even the erroneous ardour which might have rashly tasted of the tree

of knowledge, and thoughtlessly incurred death. They were the tempter, not the tempted; stern, subtle, and vindictive destroyers, for the sake of selfish possession, and selfish revenge. The faction were not glowing zealots, whose political wisdom was obscured by the blaze of their own imaginations. Zealots undoubtedly they were, but it was by a frenzy of power and possession which incapacitated them from seeing the abyss into which they were plunging themselves. They saw clearly the ruin into which they were plunging their fellow-men. There they were cool calculators. The death of hundreds of thousands was the grand essential; and the calculation was carried into effect, with the most unswerving adherence to the great Jacobin law of massacre. But Hypocrisy itself had its day. As the Revolution advanced, its doctrines grew more undisguised; the rapidity of its speed swept back its robe, and shewed the naked dagger hanging to its bosom. Every additional step in this furious chase, which hunted down the hope and the honour of France, cast away some remnant of the covering in which it had performed its early mockeries of public virtue; until, at last, it held on its career, the open despiser of all attempts at palliation, in gigantic iniquity—the assertor of government by tyranny, of finance by universal plunder, and of public regeneration by the grapeshot and the guillotine.

Burke saw this aspect of Jacobinism even before it had altogether flung away its disguise. While among us, all the enthusiasts of political change at any price,

were ready to throw themselves at its feet, and all the strugglers for place were proclaiming it a present deity, he saw the native ferocity and malice of the Infidel, and denounced the common conspirator against all laws human and divine. "In your legislature," said he to France, "a majority, sometimes real, sometimes pretended, compels a captive King to issue, as royal edicts, the polluted nonsense of their licentious and giddy coffee-houses. It is notorious, that all their measures are decided before they are debated. It is beyond doubt, that under the terrors of the lamp-post and the bayonet, and of the torch to their houses, your legislature are obliged to adopt all the crude and despotic measures suggested by clubs composed of a monstrous medley of all conditions, tongues, and nations. Among those are to be found persons, in comparison with whom Catiline would be thought scrupulous, and Cethegus a man of moderation. Nor is it in those clubs alone that the public measures are deformed into monsters. They undergo a previous distortion in academies, intended as so many seminaries for those clubs, which are set up in all places of public resort. In those meetings of all sorts, every counsel, in proportion as it is daring and violent and perfidious, is taken for the mark of superior genius. Humanity and compassion are ridiculed as the fruits of superstition and ignorance. Tenderness to individuals is considered as treason to the constitution. Liberty is to be always estimated perfect in proportion as property is rendered insecure. Amid assassi-

nation, massacre, and confiscation, perpetrated or meditated, they are forming plans for the good order of future society. Embracing in their arms the carcasses of the basest criminals, and promoting their relations on the title of their offences, they drive hundreds of virtuous persons to the same end, by forcing them to subsist by beggary or by crime."

The show of government was still carried on by the National Assembly; but, from a tyrant, it had already become a slave. Like all representative bodies which assume a power beyond right, the Assembly, in attempting to make the throne its vassal, had called in a third estate, which made itself a cypher. The ferocious auxiliary had instantly domineered over its perfidious summoner. The consequence has followed the crime in every land; and the ambition that begins by conspiracy, has always been crushed by its own instruments. "The Assembly," says Burke, "acts before the multitude the farce of deliberation with as little decency as liberty. They act like the comedians of a fair before a riotous audience. They act amid the tumultuous cries of a mixed mob of ferocious men and of women lost to shame; who, according to their insolent fancies, direct, control, applaud, explode them, and sometimes mix and take their seats among them—domineering over them with a strange mixture of servile petulance and presumptuous authority. As they have inverted all things, the gallery is in place of the house. This Assembly, which overthrows kings and kingdoms, has not even the physiognomy of a legisla-

tive body—'nec color imperii, nec frons ulla senatûs.' They have a power given to them, like that of the evil principle, to subvert and destroy, but not to construct, except such machines as may be fitted for further subversion and further destruction."

The philosophers of France, the Baillys, Lavoisiers, and Buffons, have been charged with the crimes of the Revolution. That they were guilty to the full extent of their power is undeniable—that they sedulously unhinged the national respect for religion—that they gave the sanction of their names to attacks on morals—and that some of the leading individuals of French science exhibited in their habits the profligacy of their principles, are facts which sink their memory into a grave of eternal shame. But the true work of overthrow claims other hands. We must not be unjust to the superior claims in homicide. The feeble speculators of the closet must be content with having pointed out the road to ruin. It was the race of bitter and ambitious barristers—the obscure pleaders in the obscure courts—the reptile family of litigiousness, that swarmed into the path, and corrupted the hopes of liberty. In France, the higher employments of the law had alone conferred public distinction. All ranks beneath were alike crowded and contemptible. Fifty thousand village attorneys, meagre pensioners, small dependents upon petty offices, and pertinacious holders of sinecure commissions, were an unequalled machinery for the uses of faction. The lawyers of the provincial parliaments were the especial depositaries of discontent. The tem-

per of the Gascon, hot, ostentatious, and self-sufficient, gave the precedence in clamour to the South; and the Girondists soon asserted their right to take the lead where the prize was to be public confusion, and the contest was to be a competitorship of every weakness and every crime of human nature. That faction, composed almost wholly of the lawyers of the South, met its natural fate. It realized power only to the point of national undoing, and having given the world the lesson of its utter incompetency, perished; as if to show that the passions may from time to time perform the work of the virtues—that the popular axe may be the instrument of a moral, of which the populace never dreamed—and that the blood of the man of blood may be exacted as scrupulously by the blind ferocity of vice, as by the clearsighted wrath of justice. The fate of those traitors is still the triumph of human feeling. We may turn away with mere contempt from the sufferings of the savages who trampled each other down in the general rush to the royal spoil; but we cannot withdraw our eyes from the spectacle of perfidy forced to feel that there is retribution on the earth. We may leave the common murderers to be crushed undistinguished; but we instinctively justify every pang of the Judas—the whole course of penalty, the bitter disappointment, the helpless remorse, until the hour when he anticipates the law of human abhorrence, and falls headlong. We have no such speculation in the graves of the Dantons, Heberts, Robespierres, and their associate revellers in slaughter. We see their ravages as we should

those of a troop of tigers; and when they are destroyed, think neither more nor less of their destruction than of that of a troop of tigers. But it is the smiling and bowing betrayers, the orators of humanity, the solemn devotees of principle, the pompous Vergniauds, and immaculate Rolands, the pure priests of the Constitutional Altar, where they led their unhappy King, only to stab him, in the act of clinging to the hem of his robe; it is those that are due to posterity as examples of the lowest baseness of the human heart; and the record of their punishment deserves to be one of the most indelible pages of the history of Revolution. It becomes especially important that such men should not be consigned to obscure infamy. It is of this class that all true political hazard springs. No revolution was ever effected by the mere force of the multitude. No Revolutionist, who *began* by the display of violence, ever succeeded. All men's fears are awakened by the roar of rapine suddenly let loose through the community. The most sluggish are roused into courage and activity, when they find the conflagration rolling round their own roofs, and if they are once startled, they are secure; the nation springs from its slumber, and extinguishes the incendiarism and the incendiaries together.

But, the men made for public ruin proceed in other ways. They are the professed abhorrers of all violence. They are "the mere solicitors for a small portion" of that general justice which is due to all beings bearing the shape of mankind. They limit their plead-

ings, too, rather by what they can hope to obtain from the compassion of the higher ranks, than by any reference to the natural claims of members of the same common family of freemen. Having thus made the first step, the advocacy grows bolder; it now discovers grievances, harangues on claims, and insists upon rights. Still there is nothing more than importunity—no menace—no display of the ruffian visage—no railing against authority—no visible ebullition of that hot malignity which is swelling round the villain heart. Pamphlets, speeches, and sarcasms, are the light weapons, the feeble missile shower, that cover the march of the main body. The bearers of the pike and the hatchet are not far behind, but they are kept out of view. At last the signal is made—the pleader has become the threatener—the entreaty for justice has been raised into a demand for submission—the equality of privileges is now spurned for the robbery of the higher ranks—the old constitution is no longer to crown all the hopes of patriotism by its revival, it is to be swept away as an encumbrance, for the building of a new—then follows the true history of "instalments," of "means to an end," of conciliation lavished till it becomes surrender, and of concession urged, till there is nothing left to concede. Society is to be subverted, that purification may be complete. The early morals of the State are to be expunged from the proud tablet which records the regeneration of the land. The new banner which floats in front of the new army of freedom, is to disdain all the hereditary bearings; its

blazonry is to be wrought in the popular loom, tinctured by the blood of the noble. The image and superscription of the new coinage is to be of neither King nor law, but of the new sovereignty of the streets. Confiscation is to be thenceforth the revenue, massacre the law, and the holy right of insurrection the prerogative of the sacred empire of liberty.

In England this process was distinctly begun. The clubs of 1793 were as active within the British Islands as on the mainland of France. Their muster-rolls were already swelling with all the profligate, the idle, and the envenomed of the community. Ireland, which seems sealed for eternal discontent, had her 108,000 sons of freedom! marshalled, and waiting only for the sound of the pastoral horn from the Alecto of France. The pamphleteer and the haranguer had done their work, and the civil war was armed in procinct. In another year, perhaps in another month, it was to have broken out in one vast burst of havoc and dismay. The time was pregnant with the fates of mankind. But England was not yet to perish; her destinies were not to be accomplished by the hands of hypocrites, with virtue on their lips, and all the virulence of thwarted pelf and power in their hearts. She was not to fall in the hour of popular festival, by an arrow in the heel. The War saved her. Her generous resolution to rescue Europe rescued herself from domestic ruin. As she rushed forward to throw her shield over the fainting sovereignties of the Continent, she flung the whole tribe of her assassins behind. At every step she enlarged

her distance from faction, until it found itself exposed alone: and, until, without an object and without an ally, its clamours drowned in the triumphs of the country, and its strength stripped of every name of public respect, it was glad to shrink from the public eye, and expire in the obscurity in which it was born.

One strong and unfailing *test* of Jacobinism in all lands, is its vulgarity of soul. "Nothing," says Burke, "is more certain, than that our manners, our civilisation, and all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilisation, have, in this European world of ours, for ages depended upon two principles; and were, indeed, the result of both combined, the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion. The nobility and the clergy, the one by patronage, the other by profession, kept learning in existence, even in the midst of arms and confusions, and while Governments were rather in their causes than formed. Learning paid back what it received, to nobility and the priesthood; and paid it with usury, by enlarging their ideas and by furnishing their minds. Happy, if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been satisfied to continue the instructor, and not aspired to be the master! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude."

In this passage the powerful sagacity of the writer had actually predicted the fates of the literary victims, headed by Bailly and Condorcet, both vehement worshippers of the Parisian rabble, and both destroyed by

popular cruelty, within three years;—Bailly guillotined in the midst of every accumulation of public insult, and Condorcet driven from the haunts of man, proscribed, and dying in misery. Still the period of the true democracy had not arrived; and Burke was yet to see the rise of a generation to whose despotic designs, and unsated love of blood, the crimes of the mere philosophers were as venial, as their characters were feeble, cold, and solitary. Yet the career of those two men is worth remembering; if it can hold out a warning to the grave coxcombry among ourselves, which, under the affectation of universal knowledge, is palpably intriguing for tyranny. Let those meagre imitators of the French philosophers in science, learn to dread their fate in legislation; and, taught by the scorn which clings to the memories of those miserable dupes of vanity, forswear an ambition which is yet only ridiculous.

Bailly was born in Paris about the middle of the last century; an era when France, relieved from the wars of Louis XIV., had begun to devote herself to the arts. His first pursuit was painting, his next poetry, his third science. Without possessing the powers that confer originality, he was remarkable for a plasticity of mind, which qualified him for various and vigorous attainment. The abstract sciences had become the way to fame; and where La Caille had acquired a reputation, Bailly might be secure of eminence. He published a succession of papers on astronomy, fought his way up the national road to dis-

tinction, and consummated his career by being chosen, in 1770, a member of the Academy, the very summit of French literary ambition. The Brahminical astronomy, childishly overrated by infidelity in France, as an antagonist to the Mosaic history of the origin and age of the world, had grown into a popular topic. It was adopted by Bailly; from this point his researches led him to enquire into the nature of astronomical knowledge among the ancients; and in the ten years from 1775, he produced his three histories, of Ancient Astronomy, Modern Astronomy from the time of the school of Egypt, and Oriental Astronomy. Those works made him popular with the large class who love amusing knowledge. He was now chosen a member of the Academy of Belles Lettres. Romantic speculation, and shewy theory, made Bailly the theme of the Parisian salons. And from that hour he began the career of his ruin.

Lively, unprincipled, and vain, he saw in the new politics of France an opening to new distinction. With the habitual ingratitude of French philosophy, he deserted the Government which had raised him to wealth, and threw himself into the full chase of popular applause. His intelligence and activity soon attracted notice, and entering the States-General as a simple representative of the *tiers état*, he sat as President of the first National Assembly. The fate of the monarchy was already decided, and Bailly made himself conspicuous, by the first insult to the Law, in his resistance to the royal order for the dissolution of the Assembly,

in the well-known words of the oath, "never to separate, until they had obtained a free constitution." He had now achieved the height of democratic renown, and received the fatal proof, in his appointment to the Mayoralty of Paris, on the eventful 14th of July, 1789, the day of the capture of the Bastile. But he had now entered on a pursuit in which every step is downward. The champion of Democracy must always either keep in front, or be trampled. The first attempt of Bailly to check the riot of the populace was his overthrow. He had ordered the soldiery to fire on the Revolutionary mob in the Champ de Mars. The wrath of the multitude was boundless, at this disappointment of robbery and massacre. Bailly, terrified at the aspect of public vengeance, shrank from office, retired into his study, and professed himself sick of ambition. But he was not thus to evade the evil which he and his tribe of traitors had brought upon the throne. The blood of his King was on the head of every Girondist. Bailly was dragged from his seclusion by Robespierre, and in November, 1793, the regicide philosopher was put to death, amid the shouts of the rabble whom he had inflamed, had panegyrized, and had plunged into a sea of blood, profanation, and treason. His last hours were wretchedness itself. The weather was dreadfully cold, yet Bailly, accustomed to luxurious life, and nearly sixty, was conveyed in an open cart through the streets of the metropolis where he had once usurped the authority of his King, and surrounded by the execrations of the mul-

titude who had once followed his steps with huzzas. When, after a long detour, he at length reached the place where he was to die; either some official delay, or some contrivance of official malignity, kept him standing on the scaffold for three hours, in the midst of a bitter November tempest of sleet and rain. "Aha! vous tremblez, Bailly," was the taunt of the circle of ruffians round him, who saw the shuddering of the half-naked old man. "C'est le froid, mon ami," was his only answer. But his pain was at last brought to a conclusion. He was flung under the hatchet of the guillotine, and with the roar of twenty thousand of his fellow-traitors in his ears, yelling *A bas les traîtres!* he closed a life of spurious ambition.

Condorcet was a victim of a higher order, in all senses of the word,—a man of noble birth, of large attainments, and of distinguished science. About ten years younger than Bailly, his rank had introduced him more rapidly into the leading circles of Parisian literature. He became the intimate of Voltaire and the shewy crowd of infidelity. But his own powers substantiated all his claims to scientific distinction; and France was astonished to see a Marquis, at the age of twenty-two, producing treatises on some of the sublimest subjects of analysis. The public honours of science naturally followed, and the Marquis of Condorcet was made a member of the Academy of Sciences at twenty-six. His unusual combination of eloquence with abstract knowledge added to his distinctions the Secretaryship of the French Academy, on

the death of D'Alembert. But the profligate principles of French society had prepared every man for the Revolution; for all virtue begins at the fireside, and the altar. Condorcet followed the Revolution in its fiery speed over the ruins of the State, and was consumed by the sparks flung from its wheels. He published a journal filled with treason; and realized the treasons of his journal by entering into the Jacobin Club. Too malignant to suffer royalty to perish without a wound from his hand, yet too feeble to strike the mortal blow himself, he took shelter alternately behind the ranks of the Jacobins and the Brissotins, and did the work of both without securing the protection of either.

But even this contemptible dexterity could not save him. He had sat in judgment on his King, and he was to share in the inevitable retribution of regicide. Of all the crimes of individuals or public bodies in history, the death of the unhappy Louis was perhaps the most rapidly, the most condignly, and the most naturally, avenged on his destroyers. Of the majority of 361 who voted for regicide, scarcely one escaped the direct punishment of this atrocious crime. Many were exiled, many died in utter beggary in France, many died by the same axe which had drunk the royal blood. Scarcely one survived within a few years. The Legislature stained with that blood was suddenly extinguished. France, the guilty participator, was scourged by the infliction of every scorpion calamity that can smite a perjured people; a civil war that cost a million of lives, a foreign war that cost

three millions, twenty years of conscription, finished by the ruin of her veteran army of 500,000 men, the inroads of all the armies of Europe into her provinces, the double capture of her capital, the ruin of her martial glory, and the utter dismantling of her empire. She had bound herself to the demon by a compact of slaughter, and while she could supply the tribute from the veins of Europe, the compact was good; she revelled in victory and possession, that seemed to be achieved by something above the power of man. But when she could slay no more, the compact recoiled upon the necromancer. The evil principle by which she had been borne along in the glare of unaccountable triumphs, must be paid by her own sacrifice, and the Jacobin Empire was the last price of the Jacobin spell.

Condorcet had outlived the Brissotins, but he was not forgotten by the bolder traitors. In 1793 he was pursued by the general vengeance that swept the ranks of French faction, in the shape of Robespierre; himself to fill an abhorred grave the moment his task was done. The wretched Ex-noble was hidden in Paris for nine months, a period of protracted terror much worse than the brief pang of the scaffold. At length he fled to the country, in the hope of finding refuge in the house of a friend at Montrouge. This friend happened to be absent, and the fugitive dreading to discover himself to the neighbourhood, wandered into the adjoining thickets, where he lay for two nights, perishing of cold and hunger. At length, compelled

by intolerable suffering, he ventured to apply for food at the door of a little inn; there he was recognised as the delinquent named in the decree of arrest, seized, and thrown into the village dungeon, to be conveyed next day to Paris. Next morning he was found lying on the floor, dead. As he continually carried poison about him, he was supposed to have died by his own hand! Thus miserably perished, in the vigour of life and understanding, (for he was but fifty-one,) a man of the most accomplished intellect, and possessing every advantage of rank, fortune, and fame. But he wanted a higher advantage still, honesty of heart. He had sacrificed loyalty to popular applause, personal honour to ambition, and the force, grandeur, and truth of religious principle, to the vanity of being the most dexterous scoffer in the halls of infidelity. Grafting irreligion on personal profligacy, and rebellion on both, his death was the natural produce. Living an Atheist and a traitor, he consistently finished his course in despair and suicide.

The commencement of the attack on the throne had been a general assault on the Church Establishment of France. We of this country cannot feel the zeal of advocates for a Church, the eldest daughter of the Papacy; but it moves the scorn and abhorrence of all men with hearts in their bosoms, to see the ostentatious havoc, the rivalry of destruction, the rapacious perfidy, with which that smiling and bowing Assembly made its first claim on the reprobation of posterity, in its treason to the Church of its country. We have those

in this country who are longing only to adopt their model. But whether feeble guardianship shall betray, or pretended exigency shall plunder, the miseries of revolutionized France would be sport to the miseries of democratic England. The bed on which the great criminal of the eighteenth century was flung, would be a couch of dalliance, to the bed of flame, in which the great criminal of the nineteenth would leave her ashes as a warning to the world. To this fierce faction in England, Burke addressed his most powerful warning.

" Our whole constitution," said he, " has been formed under the auspices, and has been confirmed by the sanctions of Religion. The whole has emanated from the simplicity of our national character, and from a sort of native plainness and directness of understanding, which has for a long time characterised those men who have successively obtained authority among us. This disposition still remains, at least in the great body of the people.

" We know, and what is better, we feel, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort. In England, we are so convinced of this, that there is no rust of superstition, with which the accumulated absurdity of the human mind might have crusted it over in the course of ages, that ninety-nine in a hundred of the people of England would not prefer to impiety. We shall never be such fools, as to call in *an enemy to the substance of any system*, to remove its corruptions, to supply its defects, or to perfect its construction. If our religious tenets should ever want a further elucidation, we shall not

call on Atheism to explain them. We shall not light our Temple from that unhallowed fire. It will be illumined with other lights; it will be perfumed with other incense, than the infectious stuff which is imported by the smugglers of adulterated metaphysics. If our Ecclesiastical Establishment should want a revision, it is not avarice or rapacity, public or private, that we shall employ for the audit or application of its consecrated revenue."

From those general statements, he passes to the condition of French Ecclesiastical polity. "We know, and it is our pride to know, that man, by his constitution, is a religious animal; that Atheism is against, not only our reason, but our instincts, and that it cannot continue long; but if, in the moment of riot, and in a drunken delirium from the hot spirit drawn out of the alembic of Hell, which in France is now so furiously boiling, we should uncover our nakedness, by throwing off that Christian religion, which has hitherto been our boast and comfort, and one great source of civilisation among us, and among many other nations, we are apprehensive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a void) that some uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition might take place of it."

It is no more than a just tribute to the sagacity of the great writer, or rather a homage to the protective wisdom of Heaven, speaking by the lips of political inspiration, that both those consequences strictly followed. All Europe saw with astonishment the nation, which had refused the religion of the Scriptures, in-

stantly shaping a religion of its own; inventing a burlesque compound of romance, fable, and metaphysics, for its creed; and establishing a worship half borrowed from Paganism, and half from the opera. But the extravagance of public folly was incomplete, and the pollution unworthy of Atheism, until Paris saw a *public harlot placed upon the altar!* and the whole legislature actually bowing down with the most solemn formalities of worship to this living emblem of impurity. Yet Burke's declaration of the incompatibility of Atheism with the public understanding was realized with almost equal speed. Even so early as 1793, and even from the lips of Robespierre, the confession was wrung, that the belief in a God was essential. While this consummate criminal, the demoniac of the Revolution, was decreeing, in the spirit of Paganism, a succession of *fêtes*, or days of worship, to Justice, Modesty, Truth, Friendship, and other poetic idolisms of his new Pantheon; he pronounced a discourse in the Convention on the necessity of acknowledging a God. "The idea of a Supreme Being," he exclaimed, "and of the immortality of the soul, is a continual call to justice. It is therefore a social and republican principle. Who has authorised you to declare that a Deity does not exist? Oh, you who support so arid a doctrine, what advantage do you expect to derive from the principle, that a blind fatality regulates the affairs of men, and that the soul is nothing but a breath of air impelled towards the tomb? Will the idea of nonentity inspire man with more elevated sentiments than that

of immortality? Will it awaken more respect for others or himself; more courage to resist tyranny, greater contempt for pleasure or death? You, who regret a virtuous friend, can you endure the thought that his noblest part has not escaped dissolution? You who weep over the remains of a child or a wife, are you consoled by the thought that a handful of dust is all that remains of the beloved object? You, the unfortunate, who expire under the stroke of the assassin, is not your last voice raised to appeal to the justice of the Most High? Innocence on the scaffold, supported by such thoughts, makes the tyrant turn pale on his triumphal car. Could such an ascendant be felt, if the tomb levelled alike the oppressor and his victim."

How much does this acknowledgement remind us of the self-condemning confessions of the enemies of God and man in earlier times! We might almost think that we saw the false prophet who was summoned to curse the righteous cause, contrained to bless; or hear the accents of one of those sons of irreparable ruin, whose knowledge only increases their crime and their misery, who "believe and tremble."

## CHAPTER IV.

Burke's Theory of Religious Establishments—Value of Religion to Society—Public Provision for its teaching—Fruitlessness of the French Revolution.

Burke pursues the argument for an authorized, legal form of worship, as indispensable to the uses and dignity of religion. "Instead of quarrelling with establishments, as some do, who have made a philosophy and a religion of their hostility to such institutions, we cleave closely to them. We are resolved to keep an established Church, an established Monarchy, an established Aristocracy, and an established Democracy, each in the degree it exists, and in no greater. I speak of the Church establishment first. It is first, and last, and midst in our minds. For, taking ground on that religious system, of which we are now in possession, we continue to act on the early received and uniformly continued sense of mankind. That sense, not only like a wise architect, has built up the august fabric of states, but, like a provident proprietor, to preserve the structure from profanation and ruin, as a

sacred temple, purged from all the impurities of fraud, and violence, and injustice, and tyranny, hath solemnly and for ever *consecrated* the commonwealth, and all that officiate in it. This consecration is made, that all who administer in the government of men, in which they stand representatives of the Deity himself, should have high and worthy notions of their function and distinction; that their hope should be full of immortality; that they should not look to the paltry pelf of the moment, nor to the temporary and transient praise of the vulgar, but to a solid and permanent existence, in the permanent part of their nature, and to a permanent fame and glory in the example they leave, as a rich inheritance to the world.

" Such sublime principles ought to be infused into persons of exalted situations; and *religious establishments ought to be provided, that they may continually revive and enforce them.* Every sort of moral, every sort of civil, every sort of politic institution, aiding the rational and natural ties that connect the human understanding and affections to the divine, are not more than necessary, in order to build up that wonderful structure, Man, whose prerogative it is to be in a great degree a creature of his own making; and who, when made as he ought to be, is destined to hold no trivial place in the creation. But, wherever man is put over man, as the better nature ought ever to preside; in that case more particularly, he should as nearly as possible be approximated to his perfection. * * * * To avoid, therefore, the evils of inconstancy and versatili-

ty, ten thousand times worse than those of obstinacy and the blindest prejudice, we have *consecrated* the State, that no man should approach, to look into its defects or corruptions, but with due caution; that he should never dream of beginning its reformation by its subversion; that he should approach to the faults of the State as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude. By this wise prejudice we are taught to look with horror on those children of their country, who are prompt rashly to hack their aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their father's life.

"Society is, indeed, a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest, may be dissolved at pleasure. But the State ought not to be considered a mere partnership agreement, taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved at the fancy of the parties. It is not a partnership in things subservient to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state, is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society. The municipal corporations of that universal kingdom are not

morally at liberty, at their pleasure, and on their speculations of a contingent improvement, wholly to separate and tear asunder the bands of their subordinate community. It is the first and supreme necessity only,—a necessity which is not chosen, but chooses,—a necessity that admits no discussion, and demands no evidence, which alone can justify a resort to anarchy. * * * * But if that which is only submission to necessity, should be made the object of choice, the law is broken, nature is disobeyed, and the rebellious are outlawed, cast forth and exiled from this world of reason, and order, and peace, and virtue, and fruitful penitence, into the antagonist world of madness, discord, vice, confusion, and unavailing sorrow."

The expenditures secured by the State to the Church, the assignment of revenues descending by a corporate inheritance, and inalienable for the civil purposes of the commonwealth; and the appointment of a separate body of men, inducted by learning and habits of sacred discipline, into the faculty of sustaining the functions of that Church, had all become the objects of popular obloquy and ignorant declamation. Burke defended them by a resistless appeal to human nature. The nation, in the persons of its wise, and learned, and noble, and religious, of all, who recognise the will of Providence in the formation of states; "cannot," said he, "think it reprehensible that our fealty and homage, I had almost said, this *oblation* of the State itself, as a worthy offering on the high altar of universal praise, should be performed, as all public, solemn

acts are performed; in buildings, in music, in decoration, in speech, in the dignity of persons, according to the customs of mankind, taught by their nature, that is, with modest splendour, with unassuming state, with mild majesty, and sober pomp. For those purposes, they think that some part of the wealth of the country is as usefully employed as it can be, in fomenting the luxury of individuals. It is the public ornament. It is the public consolation. It nourishes the public hope. The poorest man finds his own importance and dignity in it; while the wealth and pride of individuals at every moment makes the man of humble rank and fortune sensible of his inferiority, and degrades and vilifies his condition. It is *for the man in humble life*, and to *raise his nature*, and *to put him in mind of a state*, in which the privileges of opulence will cease, *when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue*, that this portion of the general wealth of his country is employed and sanctified. * * * * It is on some such principles that the majority of the people of England, far from thinking a Religious Establishment unlawful, hardly think it lawful to be without one. * * * * This principle runs through the whole system of their polity. They do not consider their Church Establishment as merely convenient, but as *essential* to the State; not as a thing heterogeneous and separable. They consider it as the foundation of their whole Constitution. Church and State are ideas inseparable in their minds. * * * * It is from our attachment to a Church Establishment, that the English nation did not

think it wise to intrust that great fundamental interest of the whole, to what they trust no part of their civil or military public service, that is, to the unsteady and precarious contribution of individuals. They go farther. They certainly never have suffered, and never will suffer, the fixed estate of the Church to be converted into a *pension*, to depend on the Treasury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps to be *extinguished* by fiscal difficulties, which difficulties may sometimes be pretended for political purposes, and are, in fact, often brought on by the extravagance, negligence, and rapacity of politicians. The people of England think that they have constitutional motives, as well as religious, against any project of turning their independent clergy into Ecclesiastical pensioners of State. They tremble *for their liberty*, from the influence of a clergy *dependant on the Crown*. They tremble for the public tranquillity, from the disorders of a factious clergy, if it were made to depend on any other than the Crown. They therefore made their Church, like their King, and their nobility, independent."

Having thus laid the true and rational ground for the possession by the clergy of an income and institutions which save them from the necessity of choosing between a slavish dependence for bread, and a factious dependence for power; he states the nature of their title. "From the united considerations of religion and constitutional polity, from their opinion of a duty to make a sure provision for the consolation of the feeble, and the instruction of the ignorant, they have

incorporated and identified the estate of the Church with the *mass of private property*, of which the State is not the proprietor for either use or dominion, but the guardian only, and the regulator. They have ordained that the provision of this establishment should be as stable as the *earth on which it stands.*"

From this simple assertion of the fact, he suddenly starts into a singularly beautiful expansion of the natural maxim, that religion is necessary to the highest as well as the humblest ranks of human beings. "The Christian statesman of this land would indeed first provide for the multitude, because it is the *multitude*, and is therefore the first in the Ecclesiastical institution, and in all institutions. They have been taught that the circumstance of the Gospel's being preached to the poor, was one of the great tests of its true mission. They think, therefore, that those do not believe it, who do not take care that it should be preached to the poor. But they are not deprived of a due and anxious sensation of pity for the distresses of the miserable great. They are sensible that religious instruction is of more consequence to them than to any others, from the greatness of the temptation to which they are exposed, from the important consequences that attend their faults, from the contagion of their ill example, from the necessity of bowing down the stubborn neck of their pride and ambition to the yoke of moderation and virtue; from a consideration of the fat stupidity and gross ignorance concerning what it most imports men to know, which prevails at courts, and at the head

of armies, and in senates, as much as at the loom and in the field.

" The English people are satisfied, that to the great the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They, too, are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestic sorrow. In those they have no privilege, but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this sovereign balm, under their gnawing cares and anxieties, which being less conversant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diversified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to those, our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear ; something to relieve the killing languor and overlaboured lassitude of those who have nothing to do; something to excite an appetite for existence in the palled satiety which attends on all pleasures that may be bought, where nature is not left to her own process, where even desire is anticipated, and, therefore, enjoyment defeated by meditated schemes and contrivances of delight."

The importance of placing the ministers of religion in a condition of competence, or even of wealth and dignity, with reference to their use as instructors of the higher orders, is now strongly reasoned. " The people of England know how little influence the teachers of religion are likely to have with the wealthy and powerful of long standing, and how much less with

the newly fortunate, if they appear in a manner no way assorted with those with whom they must associate, and over whom they must even exercise in some cases, something like an authority. What must they think of that body of teachers, if they see it in no part above the establishment of their domestic servants? If the poverty were voluntary, there might be some difference. Strong instances of self-denial operate powerfully on our minds; and a man who has no wants, has obtained great freedom, and firmness, and even dignity. But, as the mass of any description of men are but men, and their poverty cannot be voluntary, that disrespect which attends on all lay poverty, will not depart from the ecclesiastical. Our provident constitution has therefore taken care that those who are to instruct presumptuous ignorance, those who are to be censors over insolent vice, should neither incur their contempt, nor live upon their alms. Nor will it tempt the rich to a neglect of the true medicine of their minds. For those reasons, while we provide first, and with a parental solicitude, for the poor, we have not relegated religion, like something that we were ashamed to show, to obscure municipalities or rustic villages. No; we *will have her to exalt her mitred front in Courts and Parliaments!* We will have her mixed throughout the whole mass of life, and blended with all the classes of society. The people of England will shew to the haughty potentates of the world, and to their talking sophisters, that a free, a generous, and informed nation, honours the high magistrates of its Church;

that it will not suffer the insolence of wealth and titles, or any other species of proud pretension, to look down with scorn on what they look up to with reverence, nor presume to trample on that acquired personal nobility, which they intend always to be, and which often is, the fruit, not the reward, for what can be the reward, of learning, piety, and virtue? They can see, without pain or grudging, an Archbishop precede a Duke. They can see a Bishop of Durham, or a Bishop of Winchester, in possession of ten thousand pounds a-year; and cannot conceive *why it is in worse hands than estates to the like amount in the hands of this Earl or that Squire!* though it may be true that so many dogs and horses are not kept by the former, and fed with the victuals that ought to feed the children of the people. It is true, the whole Church revenue is not employed, and to every shilling, in charity, nor perhaps ought it, but something is generally so employed. It is better to cherish virtue and humanity, by leaving much to free-will, even with some loss to the object; than to attempt to make men mere machines and instruments of a political benevolence. The world, on the whole, will gain by a liberty, without which virtue cannot exist. * * * * In England, most of us conceive, that it is *envy* and *malignity* towards those who are the beginners of their own fortune, and *not* a love of the self-denial and mortification of the ancient Church, that makes some look askance at the distinctions, honours, and revenues, which, *taken from no person*, are set apart for virtue. The ears of the peo-

ple of England are distinguishing. They hear these men speak broad; their tongue betrays them. Their language is the *patois* of fraud. * * * * * * * * With these ideas rooted in their minds, the Commons of Great Britain, in the national emergencies, will never seek their resource from the confiscation of the estates of the Church and the poor. Sacrilege and proscription are not among the ways and means of our Committee of Supply. The Jews in 'Change Alley have not yet dared to hint their hopes of a mortgage on the revenues belonging to the See of Canterbury. I am not afraid that I shall be disavowed, when I assure you, that there is not one public man in this kingdom, whom you would wish to quote,—no, not one of any party or description, who does not reprobate the dishonest, perfidious, and cruel confiscation which the National Assembly has been compelled to make of that property which it was *their first duty to protect.* It is with the exultation of national pride that I tell you, that those among us who have wished to pledge the Societies of Paris in the cup of their abominations, have been disappointed. The robbery of *your* Church has proved a security to the possession of ours. It has roused the people. They see with horror and alarm that enormous and shameless act of proscription. It has opened, and will more and more open, their eyes upon the selfish enlargement of mind, and the narrow liberality of sentiment of insidious men, which, commencing in close hypocrisy and fraud, have ended in open violence and rapine. At home we behold simi-

lar beginnings; we are on our guard against similar conclusions."

The vulgar argument of the Jacobins of England, who now issue their mandates to public council, is, that the Church estates are the property of the public; that the clergy are a race of public servants, who have no more interest in those estates than any other public servants; and that the Church property, as it cannot be handed down from father to son, is incapable of any transmission whatever. Yet, what can be more violent than the doctrine, or more vicious than its fallacy? If there is to be but one mode of the transmission of property, what becomes of the estates of the Corporations? what of the estates of the various Cities, Towns, and Public Institutions of the empire? They must be all confiscated, on the sweeping rule, that birth alone entitles to inheritance. But "the clergy are only public servants!" We ask, What analogy is there between a placeman, or a clerk in a Government-office, who may be dismissed at an hour's notice, according to the convenience of Government, and a minister of the Church, whom no man can deprive of his profession, his dignity, or his office, while his conduct continues to deserve it?—the holder, too, of an office, which the Government can neither enlarge nor diminish, multiply nor dispense with, which it neither superintends nor pays;—the receiver of an income, neither fixed as a salary, nor dependent as a donation, but arising from the land, regulated by law, moving along only with the movement of the great landed income of

the country, rising and falling only with the general flow and ebb of the national wealth, and claiming its rights of property by the same possession and prescription which establish the Peerage of England in their estates, with only the exception, that it was the great paramount proprietor, before their oldest names were in existence;—that its property was the work of gift from the original lords of the soil, for the purposes of its pious functions, and not, like the majority of theirs, the produce of confiscation, of sanguinary violence, of the ruthless spoil of tyrants, and the scandalous venality of minions. That it was built up by hands virtuous and grateful, according to the virtue and gratitude of their time, and, at the worst, as the expiation of crime, or the efforts of man to atone for his injuries to the existing generation, by a tribute to the happiness and knowledge of all that were to come. Compared with this title, what were inheritances wrung from the ruin of families, in the hour of civil strife, or in the still more galling hour of despotic extortion, stained by the tears of the widows and orphans of brave men, fallen in the struggle against the oppressor,—testaments dipt in blood, and transmitted from scaffold to scaffold? The argument is an absurdity; and a guilty absurdity.

The pretence of the National Assembly, to making a provision for the clergy out of the National funds, is treated by Burke with the scorn due to its perfidy. "The confiscators, truly, have made some allowance to their victims from the scraps and fragments of their

own tables, from which they have been so harshly driven, and which have been so bountifully spread for a feast to the harpies of usury. But, to drive men from independence, to live on alms, is itself great cruelty. * * * * Undoubtedly it is an infinite aggravation of this cruel suffering, that the persons who were taught a double prejudice in favour of religion, by education, and by the place they hold in the administration of its functions, are to receive the remnants of their property as alms from the profane and impious hands of those who had plundered them of all the rest; —to receive, if they are at all to receive, not from the charitable contributions of the faithful, but from the insolent tenderness of known and avowed Atheism, the maintenance of religion, measured out to them on the standard of the contempt in which it is held, and for the purpose of rendering those who receive the allowance, vile in the eyes of mankind."

There is an admirable remark on the profligate plea, that the confiscation of the Church property was called for by the necessity of keeping faith with the public creditor,—a plea which is now loud in the mouth of faction among ourselves. "The enemies to all property," exclaims Burke, "pretend a most tender, delicate, and scrupulous anxiety for keeping the King's engagements with the public creditor! They should have known, that it is to the property of the citizen, and *not* to the demands of the creditor of the State, that the original faith of civil society is pledged. The claim of the citizen is prior in time, paramount in title,

superior in equity. The fortunes of individuals, whether possessed by acquisition, or by descent, or in virtue of a participation in the goods of some community, are no part of the creditor's security, expressed or implied. They never so much as entered into his head when he made the bargain. He well knew that the public, whether represented by a Monarch or by a Senate, can pledge nothing *but the public estate;* and it can have no public estate, but in what it derives from a just and proportioned imposition upon *the citizens at large.* This was engaged, and nothing else could be engaged, to the public creditor. *No man can mortgage his injustice as a pawn for his fidelity.*

The constant principle of the Revolutionists in all countries is, that no price can be too great for Revolution; and their constant answer to the argument from the miseries of France is, that she achieved liberty at last. Burke, even in 1790, showed the fallacy of the principle. France herself, in 1839, proclaims the fraud of the practice. No man can doubt the value of a free constitution. The human heart bears witness to the magnanimity of struggling against oppression. But the question is, whether subversion and massacre are the natural price of liberty; whether we cannot approach that propitious spirit, without binding the nation as a victim to the horns of the altar; whether all the comforts and securities of the highest practical freedom are not to be obtained in the securest way, by the avoidance of all injustice, public and private, by reverencing the maxims of truth and virtue, and, above all,

by taking Religion in every step of our journey through the ruggedness and difficulty of change, as our permanent guide. The argument for a revolutionary freedom, is totally overthrown by the evidence of revolutionized France. In 1789, that great country possessed nearly all the enjoyments of personal freedom and national influence. Her only deficiency, a free constitution, was on the point of being conceded by the throne, without the loss of a drop of blood. But the *true object*, of the Jacobin was not peace but plunder, not freedom but rapine. The theatrical passion too was to be consulted, and the robbery of the State was to be like a robbery on the Stage. Jacobinism must have a *spectacle;* it must dress up the characters in a new costume, and put extravagant language into their lips; France must have a melodramatic state, and melodramatic statesmen, fierce declamation, distorted nature, glaring colours, the struggle of dethroned kings, the blaze of camps and castles, and the grand finale of a universal explosion. By eleven years of this theatric frenzy, she gained only infinite misery, concluding in remorseless slavery. By eleven years more of this slavery, she gained only universal overthrow; the degradation of the single prize won through her slavery, military name; the conquest of her country; the double capture of her metropolis; the exile of her sovereign, and the abscission of her whole revolutionary empire. But, did she achieve her freedom, such as it is, by her own hands at last? No. Even to the last hour of the empire, she was still a slave, and more a slave than ever.

France was never in a lower state of bondage, than at the close of her eleven years of despotism. It was neither her own love for liberty, nor her national courage, nor that inevitable working of the principle of recovery, of which her theorists have talked so much, that gave her a constitution—it was the sword of the Duke of Wellington. If Napoleon had not been driven from the throne by the day of Waterloo, she would still have been in the dungeon; and Napoleon, or his successor, would have been the keeper of the keys.

It is a moral, well worth appending to the story of Republicanism, that it was no native energy of human kind; no natural return of that stream of vigour to the heart of France, which had been so long wasted and chilled in the extremities; no great inevitable cycle of popular magnanimity coming to rectify the errors in the reckoning of Revolution, which gave France even such liberty as she possesses at this hour. It was even a thing to be so little calculated upon, as the chance of battle; perhaps as the life of an individual. If the English General had left his gallant corpse upon that field, instead of the guards that surrounded the despotism of France; she would have been at this hour as much trampled, chained, and scourged as ever.

Thus, France, while she was offered every thing on the terms of a peaceful Revolution, lost every thing by a furious one; lost a quarter of a century of European progress, millions of lives, millions of treasure,

and more than millions, in personal suffering, moral degradation, political impurity, and national shame. For, what can national outrage produce, but national evil? What, by the course of nature, must be his crop who sows the wind? What must be the natural result of letting loose all the furious and bitter passions of the multitude, or rather of summoning them to a banquet expressly laid out to dazzle and inflame, to pamper meagre iniquity into feverish strength, to extinguish all scruples, to stimulate all vengeance, and when the intoxication is at its height, send the whole wild array, torch in hand, to wrap the noblest monuments and labours of empire, whether temple or palace, in unsparing flame? If we have men in England who still dream over the profits of Revolution, let them awake to its penalties in France, and compare the pacific constitution offered to his people forty years ago by the unfortunate and virtuous Louis, with the constitution which they at this hour possess—a throne balanced on the point of the bayonet, and a King living in perpetual peril of the dagger.

## CHAPTER V.

Opulence of France under the Bourbons—Principle of Jacobinism Spirit of Democracy, Rapine—Public Confiscation.

BURKE'S *Exposé* of the state of France under the monarchy, is one of the celebrated passages of his volume; and for its practical wisdom is worthy of more than all its celebrity. Commencing with the solid observation, that the honestest partizans of change never know how far they are to go, never think of the danger of the first step down a declivity, and are often plunged into irreparable evil, before they are aware that they have gone beyond the natural boundaries of improvement; he warns his country, that the opinion of all France in 1789, was for, what is called among us, merely a *qualified Reform*—"The instructions to the representatives to the States-General, from every district of the kingdom, were filled with projects for the reformation of the government, without the *remotest suggestion of a design to destroy it!* Had such

a design been even insinuated, I believe there would have been but one voice, and that voice for rejecting it with scorn and horror. * * * * * * * *

" To hear some men speak of the late monarchy of France, you would imagine that they were talking of Persia bleeding under the ferocious sword of Tahmas Kouli Khan, or at least describing the barbarous, anarchic despotism of Turkey, where the finest countries in the most genial climates of the world are wasted by peace, more than any other countries have been worried by war; where arts are unknown, where manufactures languish, where science is extinguished, where agriculture decays, where the human race itself melts away and perishes under the eye of the observer. Was this the case of France? Facts do not support the resemblance. * * * * * *

" Among the standards upon which the effects of government on any country are to be estimated, I must consider the state of its population as not the least certain. No country, in which population flourishes, and is in progressive improvement, *can be* under a *very* mischievous government. About sixty years ago, the Intendants of the Generalities of France made a report of the population of their several districts. I am obliged to speak from memory; but I think the population was by them, even at that period, estimated at twenty-two millions of souls. At the end of the century before, it had been calculated at eighteen. On either of those estimations, France was not ill peopled. M. Neckar, who is an authority for his own time, at

least equal to the Intendants for theirs, reckons, and upon apparently sure principles, the people of France in the year 1780, at twenty-four millions, six hundred and seventy thousand. But was this the probable ultimate term under the old establishment? Dr Price is of opinion, that the growth of population in France was by no means at its *acmé* in that year. I certainly defer to Dr Price's authority a good deal more in these speculations than I do in his general politics. In the year 1789, he will not consent to rate the people of that kingdom at a lower number than thirty millions. But, supposing it increased to nothing more than will be sufficient to complete the twenty-four millions to twenty-five, still, a population of twenty-five millions, and that in an increasing progress, on a space of about twenty-seven thousand square leagues, is immense. It is, for instance, a good deal more than the proportion of this island, or even of England, the best peopled part of the kingdom.

" It is not universally true, that France is a fertile country. Considerable tracts of it are barren, and labour under other natural disadvantages. In the portions of that territory, where things are more favourable, as far as I am able to discover, the numbers of the people correspond to the indulgence of nature. I do not attribute this population to the deposed government; because I do not like to compliment the contrivances of men with what is due in a great degree to the bounty of Providence. But that decried government could not have obstructed, most probably

it favoured, the operation of those causes, whether of nature in the soil, or habits of industry in the people, which have produced so large a number of the species throughout the whole kingdom.

" The wealth of a country is another, and no contemptible standard, by which we may judge, whether, on the whole, a government be protecting or destructive. M. Neckar's book published in 1785, contains an accurate and interesting collection of facts relative to public economy, and political arithmetic. In that work, he gives an idea of the state of France, very remote from the portrait of a country whose government was a perfect grievance, an absolute evil, admitting no cure, but through the violent and uncertain remedy of a total revolution. He affirms, that from 1726 to 1784, there was coined at the Mint of France, in gold and silver, to the amount of about one hundred millions of pounds sterling! In 1785, that is about four years before the deposition of the French King, he calculates the *numeraire*, or what we call *specie*, then actually existing in France, at about eighty-eight millions of the same English money! a great accumulation of wealth for one country, large as that country is. Some adequate cause must have originally introduced all the money coined at its Mint into that kingdom. And some cause as operative must have kept at home, or returned into its bosom, such a vast flood of treasure. Causes, thus powerful to acquire, and to retain, *cannot* be found in discouraged industry, insecure property, and a positively destructive government. In-

deed, when I consider the face of the kingdom of France; the multitude and opulence of her cities, the useful magnificence of her spacious highroads and bridges, her artificial canals and navigations, opening the conveniences of maritime communication through a solid continent of so immense an extent; when I turn my eyes to the stupendous works of her ports and harbours, and to her whole naval apparatus, whether for war or trade; when I bring before my view the number of her fortifications, constructed with so bold and masterly a skill, and made and maintained at so prodigious a charge, presenting an armed front and impenetrable barrier to her enemies upon every side; when I recollect how very small a part of that extensive region is without cultivation, and to what complete perfection the culture of many of the best productions of the earth have been brought in France; when I reflect on the excellence of her manufactures and fabrics, second to none but ours, and in some particulars not second; when I contemplate the grand foundations of charity, public and private, when I survey the state of all the arts that beautify and polish life; when I reckon the men that she has bred for extending her fame in war, her able statesmen, the multitude of her profound lawyers and theologians, her philosophers, her critics, her historians and antiquaries, her poets and her orators, sacred and profane; I behold in all this, something which awes and commands the imagination, which checks the mind on the brink of precipitate and indiscriminate censure, and which de-

mands that we should very seriously examine, what and how great are the latent vices that could authorize us at once to level so spacious a fabric with the ground. I do not recognise, in this view of things, the despotism of Turkey. Nor do I discern the character of a government that has been, on the whole, so oppressive, or so corrupt, or so negligent, as to be utterly unfit for all Reformation. I must think such a government well deserved to have its excellences heightened, its faults corrected, and its capacities improved into a British Constitution."

With this fine, and unquestionably true, statement of the general operation of the monarchy on the public force, wealth, and activity of France; he contrasts the palpable evils brought upon her by the very first movements of change. The disappearance of coin, the loss of employment,—a hundred thousand people thrown out of work in Paris alone,—the sudden, repulsive, and ruinous overflow of mendicancy, demanding, even in the last exhaustion of the treasury, an advance of fifty-one millions of livres, or upwards of two millions sterling! the reduction of the population of the capital by a fifth; and pronounces, that these evils, of themselves, show that there is something hollow in the triumph of their liberty. "In the meantime, the leaders of your legislative clubs and coffeehouses are intoxicated with admiration of their own wisdom. They speak with the most sovereign contempt of the rest of the world; they tell the people to comfort them *in the rags in which they have clothed them*, that they

are a nation of philosophers ! and sometimes, by all the arts of quackish parade, by show, tumult, and bustle; sometimes by the alarms of plots and invasions, they attempt to drown the cries of indigence, and to divert the eyes of the observer from the ruin and wretchedness of the state. A brave people will certainly prefer liberty, accompanied with poverty, to a depraved and wealthy servitude. But, before the price of comfort and opulence is paid, one ought to be pretty sure it is *real liberty* which is purchased, and that she is to be purchased at *no other price*. I shall always, however, consider that liberty as very equivocal in her appearance, which has not wisdom and justice for her companions, and does not lead prosperity and plenty in her train."

The first attempt of the Revolutionists had been, as it always is, to destroy the Church; the second was, as it always will be, to destroy the Nobility; the Throne is the last plunder, but it is to the full as determined a purpose, and will inevitably follow the ruin of its two great bulwarks. Burke powerfully exposes the pretences under which the constitutional character of the national nobility was libelled. " Had your nobility and gentry, who formed the great body of your landed men, and the whole of your military officers, resembled those of Germany, when the Hanse Towns were necessitated to confederate in defence of their property; had they been like the *Orsini* and *Vitelli* in Italy, who used to sally from their fortified dens to rob the trader and traveller; had they been such as the

*Mamalukes* of Egypt, or the *Nayres* of Malabar, I do admit, that too critical an enquiry might not be advisable into the means of freeing the world from such a nuisance. The statues of Equity and Mercy might be veiled for a moment. The tenderest minds, confounded with the dreadful exigence in which morality submits to the suspension of its own rules in favour of its own principles, might turn aside, while fraud and violence were accomplishing the destruction of a pretended nobility which disgraced, while it persecuted, human nature. The persons most abhorrent from blood, treason, and arbitrary confiscation, *might remain silent spectators of the civil war between the vices!*"

In all instances, Jacobinism is but a pretext for robbing the rich and pulling down the high. Its whole fabric is built upon two passions, the basest and bitterest of our nature;—Envy and Malignity. The Jacobin's entire creed is comprised in the two commandments of a rebellious heart—Exclude providence from the conduct of its own world, and hate your neighbour as you love yourself. Thus, disburdening his conscience, that he may give a loose to his passions, he proceeds, under the banner of unbelief and treason, to consummate his work in the extinction of morals and the overthrow of society. This harvest is not yet ripe among ourselves, but the principles are restlessly disseminated; and unless the providence which it scorns shall vindicate itself by the timely extinction of the scorners, the granary will be filled in due season. We have the whole progress pictured before us in France;

the whole seven ages of public revolt, almost in the graphic succession of the great Poet of life and nature, the smiling infancy, the ingenuous boyhood, the abrupt and fiery youth, the stern and martial manhood, the harsh and frowning maturity, until the frame sinks down into natural decay, and exhibits a spectacle of feeble, senseless, decrepitude to the world. If we sin, we sin with knowledge. If we perish, our inexperience will offer no palliation for our suicide.

But Jacobinism is, like its parent, essentially a *liar*. It seeks no reform, it desires no renovation; with the good of mankind eternally on its lips, it has a rankling hatred of human prosperity in its heart; it has the sagacity to know that its element is disorder, and this disorder it must keep alive, let the means be what they will. Still the Jacobin is at work, fabricating discontent, and distorting his own intellect, and that of every student of his school, into a hatred of the forms of truth and nature, into a love for the fantastic mingled with the furious, into scenes of passion without feeling; of power without dignity, of vengeance without justice; urging a general gaol delivery of all the follies and crimes of the heart, for the purpose, grovelling and individual as it is, of exalting himself into the means of exercising all the oppressions and corruptions that he had so contemptuously charged upon the ruling orders of the country.

"Did the nobility," exclaims Burke, with natural indignation, "who met under the King's precept at Versailles in 1789, or their constituents, deserve to be

looked on as the *Nayres* and *Mamalukes* of this age, or as the *Orsini* and *Vitelli* of ancient times? If I had then asked the question I should have passed for a madman. What have they since done that they were to be driven into exile, that their persons should be hunted about, mangled and tortured, their families dispersed, their houses laid in ashes, their order abolished and the memory of it, if possible, extinguished, by ordaining them to change the very names by which they were usually known. Read their instructions to their representatives, they breathe the spirit of liberty as warmly, and they recommend reformation as strongly as any other order. Their privileges relative to contribution were voluntarily surrendered, as the King from the beginning surrendered the right of taxation. Upon a free constitution there was but one opinion in France —the *absolute Monarchy was at an end.* It had breathed its last, without a groan, without struggle, without convulsion. All the struggle, all the dissension arose afterwards, upon the preference of a *despotic Democracy* to a government of reciprocal control. The triumph of the victorious party was over the principles of a British Constitution."

At some distance, but connected with the argument, a passage of remarkable beauty, and of no less wisdom, follows:—" All this violent cry against the nobility, I take to be a mere work of art. To be honoured and even privileged by the laws, opinions, and usages of our country, has nothing to provoke horror and indignation in any man. Even to be too tenacious of those

privileges is not absolutely a crime. The strong struggle in every individual to preserve possession of what he has found to belong to him, and to distinguish him, is one of the securities against injustice and despotism, implanted in our nature. It operates as an instinct to secure property, and to preserve communities in a settled state. What is there to shock in this? Nobility is a graceful ornament to the civil order. *It is the Corinthian capital of polished society!* '*Omnes boni nobilitati semper favemus*,' was the saying of a wise and good man. It is indeed one sign of a liberal and benevolent mind to incline to it with some sort of partial propensity. *He feels no ennobling principle in his own heart, who wishes to level all the artificial institutions which have been adopted for giving a body to opinion*, and permanence to fugitive existence. It is a sour, malignant, and envious disposition, without taste for the reality, or for any image of virtue, that sees with joy the unmerited fall of what had long flourished in splendour and in honour. I do not like to see any thing destroyed, any void produced in society, any ruin on the face of the land."

The singularly happy image of the nobility, as the consummate decoration of the great social column, excited universal applause on the first appearance of the Reflections, as uniting equal appositeness and elegance; as at once ingenious, forcible, and true. The vindication of the ruined French clergy has an additional value to *us*, from its prospective penetration into the spirit, which, in all times of conspiracy against the

state, first rages against the church. The vindication is general, not of the doctrines or professional observances of an establishment so totally distinct from that which he revered as his own, but of the common principles of human honour, assailed by the common principles of national robbery. "It was with the same satisfaction I found that the result of my enquiry concerning your clergy was not dissimilar. It is no soothing news to my ears, that great bodies of men are incurably corrupt. It is not with much credulity I listen to any, when they speak evil of those whom they are going to plunder. I rather suspect that vices are feigned or exaggerated, when profit is looked for in their punishment. An enemy is a bad witness, a robber is a worse. Vices and abuses there were undoubtedly in that order, and must be. It was an old establishment, and not frequently revised. But I saw no crimes in the individuals that merited *confiscation* of their substance! * * * * * If there had been any just cause for this new religious persecution, the atheistic libellers, who act as trumpeters to animate the populace to plunder, do not love anybody so much as not to dwell with complacence on the vices of the existing clergy. This they have not done. They find themselves obliged to rake into the histories of former ages, for every instance of oppression and persecution by that body, or in its favour, in order to justify, upon every iniquitous, because very illogical, principle of retaliation, their own persecutions, and their own cruelties. After destroying all other genealogies and fami-

ly distinctions, they invent a sort of pedigree of crimes. It is not very just in man to chastise men for the offences of their natural ancestors; but to take the fiction of ancestry in a corporate succession, as a ground for punishing men who have no relation to guilty acts, except in names and general descriptions, is a sort of refinement in injustice belonging to the philosophy of this enlightened age."

There are strong analogies between the conduct of men and nations. Few men have ever looked back upon life, without being able to point to some period when their better genius seemed to desert them, when they gave way to some passion, which, in the retrospect, seems to have been all but frenzy, or plunged headlong into some pursuit, which at length excites nothing but astonishment at the folly of the hour. It is told of the celebrated Bishop Butler, that once, walking in his garden, he suddenly started from a profound meditation, and asked his chaplain, "Whether nations could not be taken with madness—like individuals?"—France, at the present day, is the nation looking backward on the frenzy of fifty years ago. Nothing is more remarkable, in the later language of French society, than the wonder, which all express at the violences of Revolution. They pronounce it a folly—a fever—a madness—a return to barbarism—a reign of treachery—a riot of furious licentiousness—a hot carousal of blood. France will be fortunate, if she writes those epithets upon her phylacteries, and, casting aside her old democratic idolatry, worships the

spirit of freedom with the sincerity of the heart, as well as with the formality of the lips.

It would be fortunate, too, if the sovereigns of the Continent had learned from the first causes of the French Revolution, the wisdom of purifying by a sincerer morality, and a more sacred religion that popular mind which, sooner or later, in every region of Europe, will rend and explode its way only with the more fury for the weight of the resistance. The murmurs ringing at this moment round every continental kingdom, are the prophetic warnings of the havoc that will shake them all to their foundations. Still, the true time of havoc may linger. A temporary escape in the North or the South, a rash ebullition in Germany, or a treacherous burst in France, may lull the great latent principle of overthrow. The priesthood of Italy, or the guards of Austria, may trample out the flame in its first creepings along the ground; but the time will come when it will creep no longer, but, shooting up in universal and irresistible spires, enfold both the soldier and the monk, or send them forth as chief propagators of the conflagration.

But to England all that Republicanism *can* offer, is its warning. Of all the countries that ever solicited change, this is the country in which it is least required. If abuses cling to all things human, it is within the British shores that they least abound, are productive of least evil, and are extinguished by the most simple operation of public vigilance. The casual worm or weed may fix on the keel of the great vessel of the

State, but on none that bore the flag of empire were they ever less suffered to *grow;* their spreading is forbidden by the mere rapidity of her course—they are torn off by the billows through which she plunges with such proud and perpetual mastery. All that violent change can do in England, would be to subvert. Our only recompense for civil struggle would be the utter sterility of the field where the battle was fought. The nation, exhausted and impoverished by the struggle, would have no fruit of the infinite peril, confusion, and misery of the crisis, but the remorse and self-contempt that belong to the discovery of folly too late. True liberty would be thrown into disgrace; the name of Constitution would thenceforth be a sound of fear, or a record of shame; and the country, in beggary or in chains, sunk to the dust in the presence of Europe, or flooding it with her population of armed slaves, in the track of some military tyrant, would, whether victor or vanquished, be undone.

It is in this view, as a book of political wisdom, that the immortal labour of Burke is to be looked on as a national study. It spreads before us, an unrivalled chart for the course of the nation, among the difficulties that beset the time. The progress of Revolution is there laid down before us in all its grades; from the simple level on which it first stood, to the highest step of that unhallowed supremacy; where, in the native region of barrenness and tempest, like the worship of the heathen on the mountain tops, the rites of profaneness and profligacy were administered toge-

ther. But the essential and universal passion of Democracy was, and *will be*, PELF. Burke characterizes the whole spirit of the Revolution as a spirit of plunder—" I see," he exclaims, " the confiscators begin with bishops, and chapters, and monasteries, but I do not see them *end there.* I see the princes of the blood, who, by the oldest usages of the kingdom, held landed estates, (hardly with the compliment of a debate,) deprived of their possessions, and in lieu of their independent, stable property, reduced to the hope of some precarious, charitable pension, at the pleasure of an assembly, which, of course, will pay little regard to the rights of pensioners at pleasure, when it despises those of legal proprietors. Flushed with the insolence of the first inglorious victories, and pressed by the distresses caused by the lust of unhallowed lucre, disappointed, but not discouraged, they have at length ventured completely to subvert *all property of all descriptions* throughout the extent of a great kingdom. * * * * What vestiges of liberty or property have they left? The tenant-right of a cabbage-garden, a year's interest in a hovel, the goodwill of an alehouse or a baker's shop, the very shadow of a constructive property, are more ceremoniously treated in our Parliament, than with you the oldest and most valuable landed possessions, in the hands of the most respectable personages, or than the whole body of the monied and commercial interest of your country. * * * * The ground upon which your confiscators go is this—' that the rules of prescription cannot bind a legisla-

tive assembly!' So that this legislative assembly of a free nation sits, not for the security, but for the destruction of property; and not of property only, but of every rule and maxim which can give it stability, and of those instruments which alone can give it circulation."

The seizure of the Church property of France, by the arbitrary act of the Assembly, stamped the character of the Revolution; and it is to the direct and fatal consequences of this act, that Burke continually summons the eye of Europe.—" It is not the confiscation of our Church property in England that I dread, though I think this would be no trifling evil. The great source of my solicitude is, lest it should ever be considered as the policy of the State to seek a resource in *confiscations of any kind;* or that any one description of citizens should be brought to regard *any of the others as their proper prey.*"

An admirable passage follows, on the effects of this profligate finance, in accumulating debt and destroying confidence.—" Nations are wading deeper and deeper into a boundless ocean of public debt. Public debts, which at first were a security to governments, by interesting many in the public tranquillity, are likely, in their excess, to become the means of their subversion. If governments provide for their debts by heavy impositions, they perish, by becoming odious to the people. If they do not provide for them, they will be undone by the efforts of the most dangerous of all parties,—an extensive, discontented monied in-

terest, injured, but not destroyed. The men who compose this interest, look for their security, in the first instance, to the fidelity of government; in the second, to its power. If they find the old governments effete, worn out, and with their springs relaxed, so as not to be of sufficient vigour for their purposes, they may seek *new ones* that shall be possessed of more energy. And this energy will be derived, not from an acquisition of resources, but from a contempt of justice. Revolutions are favourable to confiscation, and it is impossible to know under what obnoxious names the next confiscations will be authorized. * * * I hope *we* shall never be so totally lost to all sense of the duties imposed on us by the law of social union, as, upon any pretext of public service, to confiscate the goods of a single unoffending citizen. Who but a tyrant, (a name expressive of every thing which can vitiate and degrade human nature,) could think of seizing on the property of men, unaccused, unheard, untried, by whole descriptions, by hundreds and thousands together? Who that had not lost every trace of humanity, could think of casting down men of exalted rank and sacred function, some of them of an age to call at once for reverence and compassion—of casting them down from the highest situation in the commonwealth, wherein they were maintained by their own landed property, to a state of indigence, depression, and contempt? The confiscators truly have made some allowance to their victims from the scraps and fragments of their own tables, from which they have been so harshly driven, and,

which have been so bountifully spread for a feast to the harpies of usury. But, to drive men from independence to live on alms, is itself great cruelty. * * * Undoubtedly it is an infinite aggravation of this cruel suffering, that the persons who were taught a double prejudice in favour of religion by education, and by the place which they held in the administration of its functions, are to receive the remnants of their property as alms from the profane and impious hands of those who had plundered them of all the rest; to receive, (if they are at all to receive,) not from the charitable contributions of the faithful, but from the insolent tenderness of avowed Atheism, the maintenance of religion, measured out to them on the standard of the contempt in which it is held."

The course of this system of confiscation is equally vile, and incontrovertible. No confiscator begins by announcing his object. Mammon is kept out of sight, by a veil thrown over him by patriotism! The monstrous visage of public robbery is covered with a mask of public necessity. Good faith is pleaded for a transaction which violates all its principles; and a pompous figure of Justice is placed in front of the republican machinery, which is at the moment grinding down into dust the lives and properties of innocent and helpless men. "You do not imagine, sir," Burke indignantly appeals, "that I am going to compliment those persons (the confiscators) with any long discussion. The arguments of tyranny are as contemptible as its force is dreadful. Had not your confiscators,

by their early crimes, obtained a power which secures indemnity to all the crimes of which they have since been guilty, it is not the syllogism of the logician, but the lash of the executioner, that would have refuted the sophistry which becomes an accomplice of theft and murder. The sophistic tyrants of Paris are loud in their declamations against the departed regal tyrants, who in former ages have vexed the world. They are thus bold, because they are safe from the dungeons and iron cages of their old masters. Shall we be more tender of the tyrants of our own time, when we see them acting worse tragedies under our eyes? * * * * * * This outrage on all the rights of property was at first covered with what, on the system of their conduct, was the most astonishing of all pretexts—a regard to national faith! The enemies to all property at first pretended a most tender, delicate, and scrupulous anxiety for keeping the King's engagement with the public creditor. Those professors of the rights of men are so busy in teaching others, that they have not leisure to learn any thing themselves; otherwise they would have known, that it is to *the property of the citizen*, and *not* to the demands of the creditor of the State, that the *first and original faith* of civil society is pledged. The claim of the citizen is prior in time, paramount in title, superior in equity. The fortunes of individuals, whether possessed by acquisition, or by descent, or by participation in the goods of some community, were *no part of the creditor's security*, expressed or implied. They never so much as entered into

his head when he made the bargain. He well knew, that the public, whether represented by a monarch or a senate, can pledge nothing but *the public estate;* and it can have no public estate, except what it derives from a just and proportioned imposition *upon the citizens at large.* This was engaged, and nothing else could be engaged, to the public creditor. No man can mortage his injustice as a pawn for his fidelity."

The next step in this progress of national treachery was in regular succession,—the breach of faith with all those who had entitled themselves by their services to national provision; the abolition of all pensions, no matter for what merits they had been assigned. Burke reasons briefly, but unanswerably, on this act of equal folly and injustice. "A pension, given as a reward for service to the State, is surely as good a ground of property as any security for money advanced to the State. It is a *better;* for money is paid, and well paid, to obtain that service. We have, however, seen multitudes of persons under this description in France, who had never been deprived of their allowances by the most arbitrary ministers, in the most arbitrary times; robbed, without mercy, by this Assembly of the rights of men. They were told, in answer to their claim to the bread earned by their blood, that their services had not been rendered to the country *that now exists!*"

The next step of the Republic was equally in course —the universal violation of the faith of treaties. "The Assembly, with perfect consistency, it must be owned, is now engaged in a respectable deliberation how *far*

*it is bound* by the treaties made with other nations under the former government; and their committee is to report, which of them it *ought to ratify, and which not!* By this means they have put the external fidelity of their virgin Republic on a par with the internal."

The next step was more precipitate still, but in equally regular order,—the ruin of the nobility. This was effected by rousing against them the passions, jealousies, and pride of the whole trading community. French commerce had never deserved the rank, nor displayed the large and manly character, of ours. Napoleon once named England the nation of shopkeepers; the name was misapplied, but none could have been more expressive of the condition of trade in France. A few opulent stockjobbers, or wine dealers excepted, the whole commerce of France was retail, and the whole race that carried it on were a needy, querulous, and struggling multitude, angry with the state which necessarily left them to make their bread as they could, bitter against every rank above them, and eager for any change that might give them a place in society for which they were not educated, and a property which they had not earned. The provincial towns consisted of nothing else; and in the idle hours which their scanty traffic so amply allowed, and in the common privations which neither monarchies nor republics can avert from the indolent, and the ignorant; they found room for declamation on the ill-arranged destinies of society. "There was no measure to which they were

not willing to lend themselves, in order to be avenged. * * * * They struck at the nobility through the Crown and the Church. They attacked them particularly on the side on which they thought them most vulnerable, the possessions of the Church, which, through the patronage of the Crown, generally devolved upon the nobility."

Another step, as natural in its progression as any of the former, but directly leading to the highest national crime, soon followed. "Along with the monied interest, a new description of men had grown up, with whom that interest soon formed a close and marked union,—the political men of letters. Men of letters, fond of distinguishing themselves, are rarely averse to innovation. Since the decline of the life and greatness of Louis XIV., they were not much cultivated by either him, or the Regent, or the successors to the Crown. Nor were they engaged to the Court by favours and emoluments so systematically as during the splendid period of that ostentatious, and not impolitic reign. What they lost in the old Court protection, they now endeavoured to make up, by joining in a sort of incorporation of their own."

The purposes to which this union was turned, were of a still deeper dye than those of the original movers of French rebellion. Bacon's maxim, that all things best in their nature, become worst in their perversion, was fully realized. The lettered ability of France not merely furnished a more powerful weapon for overthrow, than the rude jealousies of the stockbrok-

ers and traders, but it struck at higher objects. The rough violence of the mob aiming only at the exterior of the State, longed to break down the pillars of the throne, or strip the Monarchy of its ornaments, and have done. The deadlier hostility of profligate literature determined not only on the overthrow of the great building, but on precluding the spot from being built on for ever, by infecting the air and the soil with a moral pestilence, that prohibited the dwelling of man. The weapons forged by this band of conspirators against all law, human and divine, were poisoned; and not simply against the State, but against society. If the volumes of the Chamforts and the Diderots had finally become the guides of life, they must have extinguished every feeling that forms the honour, or the use of society. One boundless mortification must have seized the whole moral frame. Licentiousness would have been the law of private life, and treason of public; the nearest ties of blood would have only the more effectively ensured its corruption; the highest obligations of the subject to the sovereign would have been only a surer pledge of treachery. But those men had a still more awful determination to evil, in the ultimate object of their hostility. Man, and the works of man, were too trivial for their towering aspirations. "Highly they raged against the Highest." Their declared purpose, and France listened to it without astonishment, was to overthrow all belief in a God! They were wise in their generation; for of all the instruments of national confusion, national in-

fidelity would have been the most resistless, and the most consummate. The operation of furious Assemblies and Legislatures would have been feeble and tardy, to the fierce, swift, and subtle ruin projected through the land by the passions of a people unchecked by the sense of a Supreme Providence. Revolution might then have rested on its oars, and suffered the vessel to have gone down with the stream. The course of nature would have saved the toil of the politician. Having once dissolved the great principle that holds the elements of society together, he might have safely resigned the world to the conflict of its own flood and flame.

The national crime extended in France, just so far as to shew to Europe the inevitable results of Atheism adopted by a Legislature. The adoption was fearfully, and instantly, repaid by massacre. Robespierre was the incarnation of the fiend that administered the punishment, and his reign of terror the time allotted to its execution. But the success even of this atrocious effort was partial. The time for the full display of Democracy is perhaps still to come: when a more universal infidelity is to be rebuked by a more condign infliction. France was not altogether corrupt, and therefore was not altogether undone. Even in France, there were hearts in which loyalty, through all the ignorance of hereditary prejudices, and religion, through all the clouds of superstition, were still treasured; and the Vendée saved the character, and perhaps averted the Divine ruin, of the land.

## CHAPTER VI.

Portrait of the true Legislator—Sketch of Rousseau—Burke's ridicule of the meanness of Republicanism—Patriotic Stock-jobbing.

THE machinations of the Parisian men of letters had long before attracted the eye of Europe. "The literary cabal," says Burke, "had, some years ago, formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion! This object they pursued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been discovered only in the propagators of some system of piety. They were possessed with a spirit of proselytism in the most fanatical degree, and thence, by an easy process, with a spirit of persecution according to their means. * * * * Those atheistical fathers have a bigotry of their own. They have learned to talk against monks in the spirit of a monk. But in some things they are men of the world. The resources of intrigue are called in to supply the defect of argument. To this system of literary monopoly

was joined an unremitting industry to *blacken all those* who did not hold to their faction. * * * * A spirit of cabal, intrigue, and proselytism, pervaded all their thoughts, words, and actions. And as controversial zeal soon turns its thoughts on force, they began to insinuate themselves into a correspondence with foreign princes; in hopes, that through their authority, which at first they flattered, they might bring about the changes which they had in view. To them it was indifferent, whether those changes were to be accomplished by the thunderbolt of despotism, or by the earthquake of popular commotion. * * * * Those writers, like the propagators of all novelties, pretended a great zeal *for the poor* and the *lower orders*, while, in their satires, they rendered hateful, by every exaggeration, the faults of courts, the nobility, and the priesthood. They became a sort of demagogues. They served as a link to unite, in favour of one object, obnoxious wealth to restless and desperate poverty."

In this masterly sketch we have the whole graduated progress of overthrow, the outline of that whole hideous dance of Death, in which the revolutionary principle, flaunting along in a hundred different characters, throughout the whole masquerade had one perpetual partner—Homicide ! *We*, too, have the warning, and upon our own heads be the peril.

One of the common subterfuges for this defiance of justice, was, that the higher orders of France had exempted themselves from all share in bearing the bur-

dens of the State. The declaimers in England echoed the subterfuge until they had constructed it into a charge. But the superior knowledge of Burke struck away this pretext for insulting the ruined fortunes of the peerage and the priesthood. " They certainly," said he, " did not contribute equally with each other, nor either of them equally with the Commons. They both, however, *contributed largely*. Neither the nobility nor clergy enjoyed any exemption from the excise on consumable commodities, from duties of customs, or from any of the numerous indirect impositions, which in France, as well as here, make so very large a proportion of all payments to the public. The noblesse paid the capitation. They paid also a land-tax, called the twentieth penny, to the height sometimes of three, sometimes of four shillings in the pound; both of them *direct* impositions of no slight nature, and no trivial produce. The clergy of the provinces annexed by conquest to France, (which in extent make about an eighth part of the whole, but in wealth a much larger proportion,) paid likewise to the capitation and the twentieth penny, at the rate paid by the nobility. The clergy in the old provinces did not pay the capitation, but they had redeemed themselves at the expense of about a million sterling. They were exempted from the twentieths; but then they made free gifts, they contracted debts for the State, and they were subject to some other charges, the whole computed at about a *thirteenth part* of their income."

On another favourite point of declamation, he illus-

trates the true principle on which all Reform of public institutions ought to proceed. The destruction of the monasteries had been harangued into a merit, which more than atoned for all the possible evils of change; it was the cloak that covered the whole contingent multitude of revolutionary sins. Burke shews finely that Jacobinism was not wiser in this instance than it was honest, and that in the ruin even of the monastic establishments, it had the fortune of committing at once a blunder and a crime. The whole passage is a noble specimen of reasoning and eloquence. "A politician, to do great things, looks for a *power*—what our workmen call a *purchase*—and if he finds that power in politics, as in mechanics, he cannot be at a loss to apply it. In the monastic institutions, in my opinion, was found a great *power* for the mechanism of a politic benevolence. There were revenues with a public direction; there were men wholly set apart and dedicated to public purposes, without any other than public ties and public principles; men without the possibility of converting the estate of the community into a private fortune; men denied to self-interests, whose avarice is for some community; men to whom personal poverty is honour, and implicit obedience stands in the place of freedom. In vain shall a man look to the possibility of making such things when he wants them. The winds blow as they list. Those institutions are the products of enthusiasm; they are the instruments of wisdom. Wisdom cannot create materials; they are the gifts of nature or of chance; her pride is in

their use. He is not deserving to rank high, or even to be mentioned in the order of great statesmen, who, having obtained the command and direction of such a power as existed in the wealth, the discipline, and the habits of such corporations as those which you have rashly destroyed, cannot find any way of converting it to the great and lasting benefit of his country. On the first view of the subject, a thousand uses suggest themselves to a contriving mind. To destroy any power, growing wild from the rank, productive force of the human mind, is almost tantamount, in the moral world, to the destruction of the active properties of bodies in the material. It would be like the attempt to destroy (if it were in our competence to destroy) the power of steam, or of electricity, or of magnetism. Those energies always existed in nature, and they were always discernible. They seemed, some of them unserviceable, some noxious, some no better than a sport to children; until contemplative ability, uniting with practic skill, subdued them into use, and rendered them at once the most powerful and the most tractable agents, in subservience to the views and designs of men. Did fifty thousand persons, whose mental and whose bodily labour you might direct, and so many hundred thousands a-year of a revenue, which was neither lazy nor superstitious, appear too big for your abilities to wield? Had you no way of using the men but by converting monks into pensioners? Had you no way of turning the revenue to account, but through the improvident resource of a spendthrift

sale? If you were thus destitute of mental funds, the proceeding is in its regular course. Your politicians do not understand their trade, and therefore they *sell their tools.*"

The reply to the common remark, that the monasteries nurtured superstition, is in the same rich yet powerful strain.—" This I do not mean to dispute, but this ought not to hinder you from deriving from superstition itself any resources which may thence be furnished for the public advantage. It was your business to correct and mitigate every thing that was noxious in this passion, as in all the passions. But is superstition the greatest of all possible vices? In its possible excess, I think it becomes a very great evil. It is, however, a moral subject; and of course admits of all degrees and modifications. Superstition is *the religion of feeble minds.* And they must be tolerated in an intermixture of it in some trifling, or some enthusiastic shape, else you will deprive weak minds of a resource found necessary to the strongest. The body of all true religion consists in obedience to the will of the Sovereign of the world, in a confidence in his declarations, and in an imitation of his perfections. The rest is our own. It may be prejudicial to the great end, it may be auxiliary. * * * Wisdom is not the most severe corrector of folly. They are the rival follies which mutually wage so unrelenting a war. Prudence would be neuter. But if, in the contention between fond attachment and fierce antipathy, a prudent man were obliged to make a choice of what er-

rors and excesses of enthusiasm he would condemn or bear, perhaps he would think the superstition which builds, to be more tolerable than that which demolishes,—that which adorns a country, than that which deforms it,—that which endows, than that which plunders,—that which disposes to mistaken benefits, than that which stimulates to real injustice,—that which leads a man to refuse to himself lawful pleasures, than that which snatches from others the scanty subsistence of their self-denial. Such, I think, is very nearly the state of the question between the ancient founders of monkish superstition, and the superstition of the pretended philosophers of this hour?"

In all this striking exposition, there of course could be no idea of recommending the original spirit of monasteries. The obvious purpose was, to shew that their destroyers had no right to make a virtue out of their own vice. It proved, that their only merit was that of subversion, as their only instrument was force; that they had acted, not in the spirit of legislation, but of plunder; and that instead of the affected inspiration of philosophy, they had consulted only the gross and low-born impulse of rapine. It proved that they were totally ignorant of the value of the material which they thus destroyed, and that, in their rage for destruction, they had destroyed the means of great and beneficial power. It is thus that all confiscators will be discovered to have disqualified themselves for public services. Their only talent is ruin, as their only purpose is spoliation.

Burke always dwells the more deeply upon the injuries to ecclesiastical property, evidently because its seizure is the first topic of all revolutionists, the first act of all revolutions, and the concentrated crime which stamps the character of robbery on the whole revolutionary progress. This is the original breach of law which contaminates the principles of the whole moral frame, and infects all that it touches with rapine; the leprosy, that spreads its contagion, till the leper himself sinks under the disease, and dies.

Among the eminent values of the volume, is its profound adherence to the realities of human nature. Of all the brilliant writers of our country, Burke was the least bewildered by his own brilliancy. He is not following a blaze which blinds him; the blaze emanates from himself, his march is luminous, and every impulse of his fine imagination at once shoots out light on all beneath, and bears him forward with new rapidity. The work is full of those powerful thoughts which form the frame-work of philosophy. Thus, the fragment on the uses of difficulty in public and private life.—"The purpose (of the French Assembly) everywhere seems to have been to evade and slip aside from *difficulty*. This it has been the glory of all the great masters in all the arts, to confront, and to overcome; and when they had overcome the first difficulty, to turn it into an instrument for new conquests over new difficulties; thus to enable them to extend the empire of their science, and even to push forward beyond the reach of their original thoughts the landmarks of the

human understanding. Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, as he loves us better too. *Ipse pater colendi haud facilem esse viam voluit.* He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. This amicable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial. It is the want of nerves of understanding for such a task, it is the degenerate fondness for tricking short cuts, and little fallacious facilities, that has in so many parts of the world created governments with arbitrary powers. They created the late arbitrary monarchy of France. They have created the arbitrary republic of Paris. With them, defects in wisdom are to be supplied by plenitude of force. They get nothing by it. Commencing their labours on a principle of sloth, they have the common fortune of the slothful. The difficulties which they rather eluded than escaped, meet them again in their course; they multiply and thicken on them; they are involved, through a labyrinth of confused detail, in an industry without limit and without direction, and in conclusion, the whole of their work becomes feeble, vicious, and insecure."

In illustration of the vulgar precipitancy of the French legislature, he quotes a speech of one of its members, which now seems insanity, but which was then the

soberest wisdom of France. Rabaud St Etienne, a well-known name in the revolutionary councils, thus pronounced the national principle: "All the establishments of France only consummate the calamities of the people; to render them happy, all must be renewed: we must change its ideas, change its laws, change its habits, change men, change things, change words; we must destroy every thing, yes, destroy every thing, since every thing must be new created." "This man," says Burke contemptuously, "was chosen President of an Assembly, not sitting at *Quinze Vingt* or the *Petits Maisons* (the bedlams of Paris), but composed of persons giving themselves out to be rational beings!"

In noble contrast, he draws the portrait of a true legislator. "It seems as if it were the prevalent opinion in Paris, that an unfeeling heart and an undoubting confidence are the only qualifications for a perfect legislator. Far different are my ideas of that high office. The true legislator ought to have a heart full of sensibility. He ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself. It may be allowed to his temperament to catch his ultimate object with an intuitive glance; but his movements towards it ought to be deliberate. Political arrangement, as it is a work for social ends, is to be wrought only by *social means*. Mind must conspire with mind. Time is required to produce that union of minds, which alone can produce all the good we aim at. Our patience will achieve more than our force. In my course, I have known, and according to my measure co-operated with, great

men; and I have never yet seen any plan which has not been mended by the observations of those who were much inferior in understanding to the persons who took the lead in the business. When the great interests of mankind are concerned through a long succession of generations, that succession ought to be admitted into some share in the councils which are so deeply to affect them. If justice requires this, the work itself requires the aid of more minds than one age can furnish. It is from this view of things, that the best legislators have been often satisfied with the establishment of some sure, solid, and ruling principle in government, a power like that which some of the philosophers called a plastic nature; and having fixed the principle, they have left it afterwards to its own operation."

Burke's disgust for Rousseau was among the instances in which he left his Age behind. When he first came into society, Rousseau's volumes were in every hand, the fashionable model of feeling, the philosophical model of education, the political model of revolt, and the sensual model of libertinism. Burke had the sagacity to see the vice under the garb of the virtue, the manliness to denounce it, and the vigour to expose it. "Mr Hume," says he, "told me that he had from Rousseau himself the secret of his principles of composition. That acute, though eccentric observer, had perceived, that, to strike and interest the public, the marvellous must be produced; that the marvellous of the Heathen mythology had long since lost its effects;

that giants, magicians, fairies, and heroes of romance, had exhausted the portion of credulity which belonged to their age; that now nothing was left to a writer but that species of the marvellous, which might still be produced, and with as great effect as ever, though in another way: that is, the marvellous in life, in manners, in characters, and in extraordinary situations, giving rise to new and unlooked-for strokes in politics and morals. I believe, that were Rousseau now alive, and in one of his lucid intervals, he would be shocked at the practical frenzy of his scholars, who in their paradoxes are servile imitators, and even in their incredulity discover an implicit faith."

No man of his volatile age exhibits more amply the passing nature of popular fame than Rousseau. The times were made for the eminence of profligacy. Rousseau shot up in that region of busy darkness like a firework, glittered for a moment with a lustre that fixed all eyes, and was extinguished with the rapidity of the firework. He had been charged with labouring to overthrow the French Government: the charge erred, only in its not being universal. He laboured to overthrow all governments, for he laboured to overthrow all society. His whole life was a series of hostility against the peace of mankind. He assailed it in all its forms. In his Emilius, he broke down the principles of filial obedience; in his Nouvelle Heloise, he corrupted the union of husband and wife; in his Contrat Social, he dissolved the allegiance of the subject to his King; in his Confessions, he insulted all sense of re-

ligion by the blasphemy of invoking the Divine Being to be a witness of the deepest violation of his laws. By thus appealing to every evil propensity of man, he worshipped his only God, fame, and obtained for himself all the notoriety that belongs to violent partisanship on one side, and to the resentment of authority on the other. The leader who enlisted under his flag the whole profligacy of Europe, *must* become conspicuous; the victim who concentrated upon his head the wrath of all the great constituted interests of Europe, the priesthood, the tribunals, and the cabinets, must become memorable even by the means employed in inflicting the scourge. This sinister renown was his grand object, and he sought persecution, with the eagerness of a man seeking for the nutriment of his existence. He fled from land to land, delighted at the flashes of royal and religious wrath which followed him; and compounded with their keenness for their illustration. When they had at length died away, he became his own persecutor. He loved so inveterately to think himself an object of universal fear, that all his artifice was employed to prolong the semblance of persecution. He now fled where none followed. He saw visionary swords pursuing him to his pillow, and exclaimed against oppression, when even justice had forgotten him. At length artifice itself failed; he found that he could neither sting the Continental Governments into giving him the celebrity of a martyr, nor persuade mankind into the conviction that he was born to be hunted down by a conspiracy of Kings. He had now no farther business in

existence. He married his mistress, sent his foundlings to an hospital; made one desperate grasp at glory, by predicting the hour of his death; and shot himself, to accomplish the prediction. The only epitaph upon his tomb should be, "*Here lies the Slave of Vanity.*"

It is to be lamented that we have never had a life of Rousseau; not a life of panegyric—of those we have had a superfluity—but of truth; not of the sickly affectations of sentiment, or the insolence of vice; not a French life, but a British one. It would have been a service worthy even of the pen of Burke. We should then have seen the hypocrite of sensibility stripped of his skin, and the working of every muscle of his shrinking economy laid bare. The infinite heartlessness, the elaborate fiction, the habitual vice, the native imposture, would have been opened to the general eye. The idol of the age would have been cast from its pedestal, and every man would have seen for himself the worthless compound, the remnants and tinsel, that on its artificial stand, once figured in the popular gaze, like the garments of a descended deity. It is perhaps not too late for this. It is true that the subject has sunk into the natural oblivion belonging to all things worshipped with extravagance. In this great masquerade of the world, before we can catch the true voice of one folly under its vizard, it is superseded by another, or the former folly has shifted its disguise. Still the exposure of hypocrisy can never be a service thrown away. The age of the sentimental Rousseaus is with the years beyond the flood; but we still have

the hypocrites of public virtue, the Rousseaus of philanthropy, the Rousseaus of faction; the men of feeling, who project their feelings to the Antipodes, while they have not a pulse for England; the political mourners who weep over every deathbed of revolt in the circumference of the globe; hearts bleeding at every pore for every bruise on the head of Jacobinism in France, or every stain on the charter of the Goth and the Hun; but stone and iron to the miseries at their feet.

The life of Rousseau might be the history of the eighteenth century, for it touched upon all its features, religious, political, and literary. From his infancy he was wayward and insubordinate. At school he would learn nothing. Put to a trade, he was equally unmanageable. His father, a watchmaker, found him too unsteady for his own pursuit, and bound him to a solicitor. By this master he was soon sent back for idleness. Exhibiting some turn for the arts, he was next bound to an engraver. From him he ran away. But he was now a youth; and to return to the parental jurisdiction, would have been too formidable an encroachment on his natural liberty. He became a rambler through the mountain country round the lake. When he was on the point of starving, he threw himself into the hands of a Popish priest in Savoy, to whom he probably gave some hopes of his becoming a proselyte from the "heresies of Calvin;" and the influence of twenty florins, completed his new profession of faith at Turin. He again became a rambler, was dismissed

from various households, and again returned to Savoy. He now adopted music, and remained at Chamberry as a teacher, for the longest stationary period of his life, eight years, of habitual licentiousness. Disgust on both sides dissolved the connexion of the devotee and the proselyte, and Rousseau went to Paris, the common refuge of intelligence, poverty, and profligacy.—There, in 1743, some accidental influence made him Secretary to the French Legation at Venice. But his old temperament prevailed. He became restless, involved himself in the ambassador's displeasure, and again returned to Paris. For a while, he obtained some scanty provision by copying music; but he was at length to start upon the world. The question which he has made so memorable was, in 1750, proposed by the Academy of Dijon: "Whether the re-establishment of the arts and sciences has contributed to purify morals?" The circumstances of his essay on this subject are among the instances of the slight hinge on which the fortunes of individuals, and perhaps of nations, sometimes turn. Rousseau sketched a paper in the affirmative. He had at this time been employed in writing articles on music, for the Encyclopédie. Diderot, its conductor, one day came into the room while he was busied with the essay. He took it up. "What is this?" he asked; "It is eloquent—nay, true; but it is foolish! You will never gain any thing by it but a prize in Dijon. Write it for Paris—for Europe." Rousseau remonstrated, but his adviser persevered. "Write truth, and you will soon

be forgotten, perhaps never read; write paradox—startle old opinions—ridicule the past—flatter the present—be sublime and absurd—leave the world in doubt, whether they should laugh at you, or fall down and worship at your feet, and you will make your fortune." He took the subtle advice—threw his essay into the fire—produced a new one—won the prize at Dijon—became the talk of Paris—and from that moment commenced the showy, disturbed, and guilty publicity, which made his life a curse and a wonder to Europe.

He next devoted himself exclusively to the cultivation of his new popularity, and wrote for the French stage his "Devin du Village," a little opera, whose Swiss airs delighted the Parisian audiences. He was now in the way to his predicted fortune; but his vanity again threw him back. He wrote a pamphlet to prove to the French amateurs, that, from the nature of their language, they were incapable of vocal music! He soon found the hazard of returning to truth. The whole nation felt the imputation as a mortal affront, and he was forced to fly beyond the frontiers. He took refuge in Geneva; and as his faith was not firmer than his morality, he attempted to propitiate public opinion by renouncing Popery.

But he was at length to signalize himself by a production which combined all his talent and all his profligacy. Its groundwork was an event of his early life, in which, having basely abused the trust reposed in him as a tutor, he had been expelled the family with

scorn and shame. This work was his "*Julie, ou La Nouvelle Heloise.*" Diderot's advice had made a powerful impression. It never quitted him during his life. He prefaced his volumes by a declaration worthy of the highest flight of paradox;—that the female who read a page of them was inevitably undone; that he looked upon it as a misfortune that the age no longer existed in which such works were the subject of public justice; and that every woman should, as an act of essential precaution, throw the book instantly into the fire. If Diderot knew mankind in general, Rousseau shewed in this instance that he knew the nature of French women well. The prohibition, the danger, and the romance, in one, formed a stimulant which the national curiosity found irresistible. The Nouvelle Heloise was instantly in every female hand in France; it was universally adopted as the model of manners, feelings, and language; and the author of a work, infamous in all its objects, was blazoned by all the voices of a volatile people, as the first writer of Europe!

The artifice had thus achieved its purpose; and the records of literature have never given an example of an artifice more required by the innate deficiencies of a work of fame. This celebrated romance realizes the saying of a witty profligate of Versailles—"If it were not for the vice, it would be the dullest spot in the world." The New Heloise, if it were not for its guilt, would probably never have been endured. All higher taste is as much revolted by it, as all higher morality. The masculine effrontery of the heroine—

the gross insensibility of the husband—and the mingled meanness and exaggeration, the cold treachery, and the dry formality of the half-mendicant, half-pedagogue, who acts as the seducer; leave us only to be astonished at the chances which give celebrity. It is true, that it contains passages of *French* eloquence, and therefore eloquence in no other land or language of earth; ostentatious appeals to improbable emotions; laboured amplifications of common-place thoughts, and overflowing raptures on skies and stars, winds and waters; and all those by a man whose only delight was in the lowest sensualities of a life at war with every feeling of purity and nature.

Having thus given his contribution to the private shame of society, he was only the fitter to assist in its public ruin. The double apostate in religion, and the corrupter in morals, he was by instinct the Jacobin. He now turned from profligacy to politics, and shewed that the change of subject had not diminished his venom. He published his "*Social Contract*," a work which declared that freedom was incompatible with all governments—but a Republic.

The times were threatening, and the advocate of rebellion could not expect to meet with impunity in the days when kings were in peril. He was driven successively from France and Switzerland—again stole into Paris, where he fantastically assumed the disguise of an Armenian; and from France, in 1766, on the instigation of his brother atheist Hume, came to England. Here he soon grew weary of the decencies re-

quired by English life; felt that the first attentions of curiosity and partisanship were passing away; unable to live without perpetual food for his vanity, invented a plot for his own assassination, and, under cover of his imaginary peril, found an excuse for flying back to Paris once more. But he had already exhausted his fame; other men had filled up his place, and the subterranean voices of war and revolution were too loud, for the public to listen to the querulousness of a half-maniac of sixty, who had insulted every benefactor, and whose only enjoyment was that of continually exclaiming, that he was betrayed by all. He now became domestic, and married his housekeeper! His five children by her the man of sentiment had previously sent to the foundling hospital, never to see them again. He was nearly forgotten, when the eccentric Marquis Girardin gave him a place of refuge in the grounds of his chateau at Ermenonville. He enjoyed this liberality but for a few months; in July 1777, he was found dead in his chamber, the victim of his own hand!

Through what new illusions we must pass,—what new impostor is to lead us after him into the desert, and bewilder us with the sight of cities in the clouds, and castles fabricated of the vapours of the burning soil of rebellion,—what new shape of "glory star-bright" the tempter is to take in those times of peril, which undoubtedly are yet to try the firmness of Europe by a still keener test, and finish the long series of falls and restorations by one vast, consummate struggle

of national good and evil, is among the secrets of the future. But it is only by looking to the wisdom of the past, by remembering the fallacies that have been detected, and the dreadful calamities which were the price even of their detection, that we can reap the advantage of experience,—the most formidable and anxious experience that has yet fallen to the lot of man.

One of the strong absurdities of Republicanism is, that while it universally proclaims the virtues of the multitude, it universally legislates as if vice were the only quality of mankind. All is the basest suspicion. Every man is to be deemed a villain; and the whole lofty theory of reliance on public spirit, or personal feeling, is extinguished in the practice of precautions, at once degrading to human nature, and fatal to the machinery of government. With the Republican, all must be the representation of the people, for kings *must be* tyrants, and nobles oppressors. Yet even this representation has nothing to do with confidence. Every movement of the representative must be watched with the closeness of a fraudulent debtor, and every hour of his office demands the vigilance of a jailer. The whole system is one of hindrances. Every step of the depositary of the national interests is prescribed. He must never move without the sound of shackles on his legs. He must never open his lips, without remembering that he is speaking, not in the national council, but to the dignitaries of the hovel. The first privileges of regenerated France were, to put this system in practice. They exiled all the ministers from their houses

of legislation, on the established principle, that ministers *must* be traitors. They next curtailed the duration of their legislatures, on the equally established ground, that all parliaments *must* have no other object in their continuance than public robbery, personal corruption, and everlasting despotism. They next prohibited the continuance of any member in the legislature for more than two years. They next prohibited the re-election of any member before an interval of two years. On those regulations, worthy of a gang of swindlers, and scarcely amounting to the "honour that exists among thieves," Burke pounces with indignant scorn. "If your representative," says he, "act improperly at the end of his two years' lease, it does not concern him for two years more. By the French Constitution, the best and wisest representatives go, equally with the worst, into this *limbus patrum*. Their bottoms are supposed frail, and they must go into dock to be refitted. Every man who has served in an Assembly is ineligible for two years after. Just as those magistrates begin to learn their trade, *like chimney-sweepers, they are disqualified from exercising it.* Superficial, new, petulant acquisition, and interrupted, dronish, broken recollection, is to be the defined character of all your future Governors. Your Constitution has too much of jealousy, to have much of sense in it. You consider the breach of trust in the representative so principally, that you do not at all regard the question of his fitness to execute it. The purgatory interval is not unfavour-

able to a faithless representative, who may be as good a canvasser as he was a bad Governor."

One of the characteristics of the Revolution was the enormous issue of paper; an issue which is always the longing of Jacobinism in all countries, and of which the true interpretation is, the making of rapid fortunes in the hands of stock-jobbing politicians.

Assignats.—"Your Legislators have founded a commonwealth upon gaming. The great object in their politics is to metamorphose France from a great kingdom into a great play-table; to turn its inhabitants into a nation of gamesters; to make speculation as extensive as life; and to divert the whole of the hopes and fears of the people from their usual channels into the impulses, passions, and superstitions of those who live on chance. The old gaming in Funds was mischievous enough, but it was so only to individuals. Even when it had its greatest extent in the Mississippi and South Sea, it affected but few, comparatively. But where the law is itself debauched so as to force the subject to this destructive table, by bringing the spirit of gaming into the minutest matters, and engaging every body and every thing in it, a more dreadful epidemic of that kind is spread than has yet appeared in the world. With you, a man can neither earn nor buy his dinner without a speculation. What he receives in the morning, will not have the same value at night. What he is compelled to take as pay for an old debt, will not be received as the same when he

comes to pay a debt contracted by himself. Industry must wither away. Economy must be driven from your country. Careful provision will have no existence. Who will labour without knowing the amount of his pay? Who will study to increase what none can estimate? If you abstract it from its uses in gaming to accumulate your paper wealth, would not be the providence of a man, but the distempered instinct of a jackdaw."

The prediction was fulfilled to the letter. The Assignats, after having poured millions into the coffers of the ruling rebellion, suddenly sank into the value of the paper of which they were made. Thousands and tens of thousands were ruined. The nation was bankrupt, but the Jacobin Government was rich; and the operation had thus all the results that it was ever made for.

All the wit and wisdom of all our rectifiers of the Constitution is lavished on libelling the Peerage. Following the example of their masters in the Jacobin Club; with our sages, it is an encumbrance on the shoulders of freedom, a chronic distemper of the State, a worthless effigy of times of popular weakness and lordly insolence: a suit of the old armour of old tyranny, superseded by more modern instruments of personal greatness and national defence, and fit only to be consigned to the natural receptacles of dust and decay. Burke turned the light of his mind on the subject, and shewed, that a House of Peers, or Senate, was essential to the peace, power, and continuance of a free constitution; that it was, of all the

parts of a free constitution, that which it was least in the power of a legislation to make, and therefore ought to be most sacredly preserved; and that, useful as it was in old times, in standing between the prerogative and the populace, it was still more useful in our own day, in forming a defence for freedom against the rashness of the multitude acting upon the fears of the Legislature. "Your all-sufficient Legislators," says Burke, "have forgot one thing which, I believe, never has been before, in theory or practice, omitted by any projector of a Republic. They have forgotten to constitute a *Senate*. Never before this time was heard of a body politic composed of one legislative and active assembly, and its executive officers, without such a council; without something to which foreign States might connect themselves; something to which, in the ordinary detail of Government, the people could look up; something which might give a bias and steadiness, and preserve something like consistency in the proceedings of the State. Such a body Kings generally have as a council. A monarchy may exist without it, but it seems to be of the very essence of a Republican Government. It holds a sort of middle place between the supreme power exercised by the people, or immediately delegated from them and the mere Executive. Of this there are no traces in our Constitution, and in providing nothing of this kind, your Solons and Numas have, as much as in any thing else, discovered a sovereign incapacity."

Absurdities on the topic of Royalty are not less the

trading stock of modern declamation. That the direct revolter should desire first to extinguish all reverence for the object which he proposes to destroy, is natural. But Burke's purpose was with that vast and foolish class, who talk the language of insult through the excess of ignorance, and who vilify a King, simply from obtuseness of brain.

"The French have chosen a degraded King. This, their first executive officer, is to be a machine, without any sort of deliberative discretion in any part of his function. * * * * According to the new Constitution, the higher parts of judicature in either of its lines are not in the King. The King of France is not the fountain of justice; the judges, neither the original nor the appellate, are of his nomination; he is not even the public prosecutor. When we look into the true nature of his authority, he appears to be nothing more than a chief of sergeants-at-mace, catchpoles, jailers, and hangmen. It is impossible to place any thing called Royalty in a more degrading point of view. A thousand times better had it been for this unhappy Prince, that he had nothing at all to do with the administration of justice, deprived as he is of all that is venerable, and all that is consolatory in that function, without a power of suspension, mitigation, or pardon. Every thing in justice that is vile and odious is thrown upon him. It is not in nature, that, situated as is the King of the French, he can respect himself, or be respected by others. View this new executive officer on the side of his political capacity—

as he acts under the orders of the National Assembly. To execute laws is a royal office—to execute orders is not to be a King! However, a political executive magistracy is a great trust. Means of performing the duty ought to be given by regulation; and dispositions towards it ought to be infused by the circumstances attendant on the trust. It ought to be environed with dignity, authority, and consideration; and it ought to lead to glory. The office of execution is an office of exertion. It is not from impotence we are to expect the tasks of power. What sort of person is a King to command executory service, who has no means whatever to reward it? Not in a permanent office—not in a grant of land—no, not in a pension of fifty pounds a-year—not in the vainest and most trivial title. In France, the King is no more the fountain of honour, than he is the fountain of justice. All rewards, all distinctions, are in other hands. Those who serve their King can be actuated by no natural motive but fear—by a fear of every thing except their master."

So much for stripping a King of his constitutional power, to please the rabble; who then can have nothing to strip him of—but his crown and his life! Yet, to coerce the monarch, to have "a cheap King," in other words, to have a nominal depository of power, and cut away the royal robe until it is too scanty for the royal person; to pauperise the royal functions, as a preliminary to getting rid of the name, is intelligible in the haters of all constitutions. But it is the rankest folly in those

who desire it only to live in peace, and enjoy liberty. Those should know, that it is the strength of the Government which makes the security of the governed; that a King without power is a King without protection; that in striking the sword out of his hands, they but disarm their defender. At this hour, instead of diminishing the royal power of resistance, it would be wisdom to invigorate it into active power; to give it the means of meeting popular aggressions on the constitution; and to answer the menaces of insurrection, the trumpets of the boasted millions of Jacobins in our manufacturing provinces, and the rebellious signal-fires of Ireland, by the establishment of a prompt and bold authority, which would rescue the land for a century to come.

The calamities of the French Revolution have now, in some measure, passed away; yet the ground is still covered with the wrecks of that tremendous time. The present race live in perpetual fear. Their royalty is but a hurried gathering of the ancient remnants left by the great earthquake; in which the King is barely distinguished from the multitude. The nation itself is *hutted;* its whole constitution is but a scrambling together of the old *régime*, mingled with the scarcely cold slag and ashes thrown up by the revolutionary explosion. All is temporary, foundationless, and tentative. All is palpable conviction, too, that it is not worth while to erect any governmental fabric of a more solid kind, while the land continues still to fret with perpetual symptoms of her old fever. Even at

the distance of a quarter of a century, all eyes look for the bursting up of those flames which once wrapt the throne; every murmur sounds hollow and predictive; every darkening of the political horizon makes men look, not abroad, as once, but at home; feel the ground quivering under their feet, and think, not of war, but of revolution. Is there a sound politician in Europe who does not see, that the true preservative against this sweeping calamity of Europe, would be, to strengthen the legal hands of the French Monarch—to give him the power of acting with direct and extensive energy—to render him invincible in any contest with the violence of the mob—and, by surrounding him with the authority fit for a constitutional King, to release him from the necessity of ruling by the sword.

When Pitt, in 1793, was reproached by Opposition with refusing to make peace with France, he turned on his reproachers, and boldly asked, With whom was he to make peace? where was the French Government? Was England to send an ambassador to treat with the Tribunal, or catch the faction as it passed through the streets to the scaffold? What; could the honourable gentlemen tell him, was the Government of France at that hour, or who? or how long they might last, or whether another week of change might not see the firmest treaties worth no more than the paper they were written on; and France, under the new sovereignty of a new mob, choosing new allies, acting on new principles, and finishing a mock negociation by a new plunge into hostilities? And what is the dif-

ference to the present hour? A rabble quarrel, a popular play, a trial for libel, a Parliamentary duel, a refugee princess, a duellist's funeral, each and all shake the consumptive frame of the State into convulsions. A hundred thousand of the rabble following the hearse of an individual never heard of before, and five-and-twenty thousand troops of the line paraded to keep them from sacking the Tuileries, are the evidences of royal stability. If Louis Philippe were to perish to-morrow, who would ensure royalty in France for a week? The succession of his family would be as much a matter of the dice, as any game at the tables of the Palais Royal; the whole a turn of chance, whether the Duke of Orleans put the crown on his head, or some new La Fayette, or Robespierre, some representative of the coxcombry, or the savageness of Republicanism, ascended the chair in the majesty of the *bonnet rouge;* whether the Parliament took the oath of allegiance, or the bayonets of the National Guard, settled the succession in their own way, and established a Grand National Republique of ten-franc freeholders! Those truths are as palpable as the day: and it is to this floating government that we are to link the British Empire, and bravely resolve to sink or swim with our companion.

And the chief calamity of this state of things is, that England has been insensibly involved in the fates of France; Revolution has been fondled, until we have caught the contagion; the "three glorious days" of Paris gave us our Reform Bill of 1831; a French mob was the teacher of an English Legislature. This dan-

gerous folly has changed the whole spirit of our policy, as it threatens the safety of all our institutions. It has already lost us all character with our old continental allies. And England, instead of being the anchorage in which they all took shelter in the storm; is now the shoal which they all dread, even in the calm. And with unquestionably decreasing influence in Europe; with new antipathies rising in the great world of the West, with the power of the multitude domineering at home, and the power of the Constitution corrupted by popery, we have to make our preparations, as we best may, against the bloodiest contest that Europe has ever seen, and in which the war will be with England, against England, and for the last ship and shilling, the last acre, and the last privilege, of England.

All conjecture on the course of such a war must be vague; yet it is scarcely to be doubted, that it will develope features of character new to European hostility. It will probably be on a larger scale, with more desperate hazards, and more decisive and final devastation than any which our era has witnessed. It is evidently the opinion of those most conversant with such subjects, that the means, and the site of war will alike be changed; that the means will be, not skill, but numbers; that science will have the inferior operation; the true element of the war will be multitude. With the Euxine for her wet dock, Russia alone may pour down a hundred or a thousand ships; some to be destroyed, some to be captured, but the rest to sweep the

seas. Europe perhaps will not be, as of old, the only, or even the chief scene, of these hostilities. Asia Minor, Syria, the borders of the Euphrates, and the Indus, too, may have their fields. The days may be at hand, when those vast stagnant countries, capable of being roused from their stagnation only by war, will have their share of the whirlwind; Egypt and the Saracen world will pour forth, to meet the North; the Tartar tribes, which have now for two hundred years been swelling their undisturbed population, and sharpening their unused swords for war, may be once more summoned to the work of ruin, fill the East with terrors of barbarian inroad, and perform once again their part in shaking the system of the world. Whether this will be the last blow; or whether a still more universal havoc shall complete the catastrophe; is among those questions which only presumption would attempt to resolve. But, of one thing *we* are sure, that, to prepare for struggle is the best security for success; and that to return to the maxims by which England was made wise, happy, and free, is the best preparation, let the struggle come when it will.

What was the fine far-seeing language of Burke forty years ago? "A French conspiracy is gaining ground in every country. This system, happening to be founded on principles the most delusive, indeed, but the most flattering to the natural propensities of the unthinking multitude, and to the speculations of all who think, without thinking profoundly, *must* extend its influence. A predominant inclination towards it

appears in all who have *no religion;* when otherwise, their disposition leads them to be advocates even for despotism. Hence Hume, though I cannot say that he does not throw out some expressions of disapprobation on the proceedings of the levellers, in the reign of Richard II., yet affirms that the doctrines of John Bull were conformable to the ideas of primitive equality, *which are engraven in the hearts of all men.* Boldness formerly was not the character of Atheists, as such. They were even of a character nearly the reverse. They were, like the old Epicureans, rather an unenterprising race. But they have grown active, designing, turbulent, and seditious. They are sworn enemies to king, nobility and priesthood."

Now, the fact being unquestionable, that French principles are the principles of a large, powerful, and reckless party in England, who, alternately regarding Ministers as their tools and their antagonists, feel perfectly satisfied as to their being able to sweep all administrations into their current; it must be of some import to know what those principles are. Forty years ago their creed as to kings was laid down by the celebrated Condorcet, in his paper on the education of the Dauphin, of whom he had been chosen by the National Assembly the tutor, or rather the jailer. "The Assembly willed that the *uselessness of a King*, and the necessity of seeking means to establish something in lieu of a power founded *on illusion*, should be one of the first truths offered to the reason of the pupil; the obligation of conforming himself to this, be-

ing *the first of his moral duties.* The object is less to form a King, than to teach him that he should know how to *wish no longer to be such.*" This was the creed of the man who had filled the chair of the National Assembly, was their perpetual secretary, and their principal guide. And this was at the period when a King was still acknowledged, and before the philosophers had given the practical illustration of their doctrines by cutting off the King's head.

## CHAPTER VII.

Illness of Burke's Son—Death—Burke's Dejection—Ridicule of the late Duke of Norfolk—Attack on Burke's Pension—His attack on the Duke of Bedford.

But while Burke was thus supporting, by his parliamentary labours, and by his unrivalled pen, the cause of the Constitution and of human nature, he received a blow which almost totally unmanned him. His only son was seized with an illness, which speedily made such progress, that to all eyes, but those of the fond and sanguine father, his fate was sealed. It had been Burke's ambition to educate his son for public life, and no pains were spared to cultivate in him all the qualities of Statesmanship. It has been too much the habit to compare the son with the eminent father, and to depreciate him below the level of ordinary talent, as much as he fell below the level of extraordinary. By this unfair estimate Richard Burke has passed for one of the customary examples of parental blindness to filial mediocrity, and has thus been reckoned altogether beneath his value. But Burke

was not a man to be so simply hoodwinked by affection. If the son of Cicero was a blunderer, we have yet to learn that Cicero proposed him for public business. Burke certainly would not have embarked his son in the most difficult career of talent and of life, if he had not gravely satisfied himself that the vessel was equal to the voyage. On retiring from Parliament in June, 1797, he had obtained his son's return for Malton, and placed him on the first step of office, as Lord Fitzwilliam's secretary in the Irish Viceroyalty. But his career was destined to be untried by the temptations of power, and the casualties of fortune. His lungs soon gave evidence of consumption. Burke's sensitiveness of heart was so well known to his friends, that Brocklesby, the family physician, decidedly suppressed all intimation of the nature of the disease from the unfortunate father; declaring that it would sooner put an end to his life than his son's. The patient was removed to the suburbs, for the benefit of the air, until he should commence his journey to Ireland. But that period was never to arrive. At length, but a week before he breathed his last, it was found necessary to give the intelligence to his unhappy father, who, from that moment until he closed the tomb upon him, scarcely slept, tasted food, or was able to restrain himself from the most affecting expressions of sorrow. A longer notice would probably have worn him out of the world. Some letters from Dr Laurence, the well-known friend of Burke, and brother of the late Archbishop of Cashell, present a detail of the pro-

gress of the disorder, and of what must interest us still more, its influence on the great mind and feeling heart of Burke. The letters are to Mr Haviland, a connexion of the family. A few extracts are here given:—"*August* 1, 1794—As Dr King" (afterwards Bishop of Rochester) "undoubtedly communicated to you the melancholy contents of my yesterday's letter, you will be anxious to know whether another day has brought any new hope. There is a little, feeble and faint. The sentence is at least respited for a time. A second letter from Mr Burke yesterday evening informed me that the physicians forbade him to despair. The disorder is a consumption. * * * * The family are with poor Richard in lodgings a little beyond Brompton. It is a house of mourning indeed. Dr Brocklesby says, it is almost too much for him, who, as a physician, is inured to such sights, and in some degree callous to them. * * * * * Mr Burke writes to me that he is almost *dried up*. The conclusion of his first letter was highly affecting. He ended with an abrupt exclamation—'Oh, my poor brother died in time!'"

Before the next letter, the catastrophe had arrived. "*August* 4,—When I shortly informed you of the melancholy event on Saturday, I was acquainted with the event, and nothing more, from the mouth of Dr Bocklesby. Some of the particulars I have since collected, as well as I could. They may afflict you, but there is a pleasure in such sorrow, which he who cannot taste, deserves to be pitied. You know every

thing till the night previous to his death. During that night he was restless and discomposed. In the morning his lips were observed to have become black. His voice, however, was better. * * * * * His father and mother did not suffer themselves to be flattered by the favourable symptoms. Their lamentations reached him where he lay. He rose from his bed. He then desired the servants to support him towards the room where his father and mother were sitting in tears. * * * * He endeavoured to enter into conversation with his father, but grief keeping the latter silent, he said, after some observations on his own condition, 'Why, sir, do you not chide me for these unmanly feelings? I am under no terror. I feel myself better, and in spirits, yet my heart flutters, I know not why. Pray, talk to me, sir; talk of religion, talk of morality; talk, if you will, on indifferent subjects.' Then turning round, he said, 'What noise is that? Does it rain? No, it is the rustling of the wind through the trees.' And immediately, with a voice as clear as ever in his life, and a more than common grace of action, he repeated some beautiful lines from Adam's morning hymn. They are favourite lines of his father's, and were so, as I recollect, of his poor uncle's, to whom he was then going, with those very lines on his tongue,—

> "'His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow—
> Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
> With every plant, in sign of worship wave!'

"He began again, and again pronounced the lines

with the same happiness of elocution and gesture, waved his head in sign of worship, and, worshipping, sank into the arms of his parents, as in a *profound and sweet sleep!* * * * The behaviour of our two poor friends is such as might be expected by those who know both their sensibility and their strength of reason. * * * During the first day, the father was, at times, as I have heard, truly terrible in his grief. He occasionally worked himself up to an agony of affliction, and then, bursting away from all control, would rush to the room where his son lay, and throw himself headlong on the bed or on the floor. Yet, at intervals he attended, and gave directions relative to every little arrangement, pleasing himself most with thinking what would be most consonant to the living wishes of his son. At intervals, too, he would argue against the ineffectual sorrow of his wife," * * * " *Aug.* 7.—At last I have seen poor Burke. His grief was less intolerable than I had supposed. He took me by surprise, or I should have avoided him. He told me he was bringing his mind by degrees to his miserable situation; and he lamented that he went to see his son after death, as the dead countenance has made such an impression on his imagination, *that he cannot retrace in his memory the features and air of his living Richard!*"

This letter corrects some of the statements of the foregoing. The patient had reached the room where his father was, but finding himself feebler, returned to his bed. It was his father who explained to him the noise, as the rustling of the trees. He then repeated

the lines from Milton, sank back, and after a short struggle breathed no more.—" *Aug.* 12. At last I have had the pleasure (I may truly say, under the circumstances) of seeing our dear Mrs Burke. After the first meeting, she was more composed than he; or she played her part more naturally, in order not to discompose him. *He* took me by the hand, and spoke in a tone of artificial and laborious fortitude; *she* saw through the disguise, and gently reproved him for not supporting himself as he promised."

There is undoubtedly in this violence of sorrow something that may be reproved, as well as much that must be forgiven. It does not become men who have learned to " bear and forbear" in the high school from which the principles of Burke flowed, to exhibit despair on any visitation, let the blow be however severe. In the excess of sorrow there is an approach to rebellion against the decrees of a wisdom which orders all things in the spirit of benevolence. But much must be allowed to the peculiar glow and susceptibility of Burke's mind: the temperament of genius is not merely tender, but imaginative; and its quickness expands such a vision of sorrow, raises such clouds over the mind, and so sharpens and envenoms every sting of mental suffering, that all its pains, like all its joys, are urged to their keennest pitch; and the spirit that is so keenly capable of rapt and enthusiastic delight, repays its privilege by turning anguish into agony. The loss of Burke's son would have been melancholy under any circumstances, as his only offspring; but he was lost

at an age when he might seem to have ensured a long and active existence; in the height of accomplishment and intellectual vigour; descending into that arena where his father's fame threw a glory round his advance, and with all the noblest prizes of the manliest rivalry open to his generous contention. He died at thirty-six. On Burke's remaining years the effect was powerful, and he might be said to have been visibly approaching the grave, from the day when his son was laid within its bosom. Perhaps the effect on his mind, by clearing it from the immediate pressure and contact of the world, was to add purity to its strength, to transmute its knowledge into the principles and essence of universal wisdom, and, by elevating, to spiritualize alike its views and its powers. But his frame was palpably shaken. He never afterwards entered Beaconsfield Church; nor could bear even to look towards it, since the interment of his son. It was the observation of his friends that the change in his appearance portended dissolution; his countenance was meagre, his chest hollow, and his body evidently bowed down by the blow.

But we have now to see this celebrated man returning to that field in which his fame was first won, and shewing, that if he bore the arms of the patriot and the statesman no longer, it was not for want of the power to wield them in the front of the battle. Yet, he returned now by compulsion; forced in his latter days, and with his heart subdued by calamity, to defend his character, and waste on the punishment of a character-

less and irredeemable faction, the weapons which were made to war for humankind. Burke had closed his parliamentary career by sealing the exclusion of the Foxites from Ministerial hope. Having first awakened all the honest members of Opposition to a sense of the national danger, he roused them into activity in the national cause. A junction of those members with the Ministry was effected by Burke's especial influence; and in July 1794, the junction was made practicable and public by the appointment of the Duke of Portland to the third Secretaryship of State, with the management of Ireland, and the addition of the blue ribbon. Earl Fitzwilliam was made President of the Council, after which he accepted the Irish Viceroyalty. Earl Spencer was made Lord Privy Seal, and afterwards First Lord of the Admiralty; and Mr Windham was placed in the Secretaryship of War. Lord Loughborough was already Chancellor.

This solid barrier rendered Opposition furious. It had been summarily deprived of all those whose advice and weight had hitherto restrained its violence; and the remainder were desperate with the sense of exclusion. Burke's share in this important transaction was well known, and on his head all the tempest lowered. The first attack was made on him by a man whom Opposition were in the habit of pushing forward on all desperate occasions, on the principle of the Irish rebels, driving forward their bullocks to disorder the charge of the English cavalry. The Duke of Norfolk was a nobleman of the species admirably adapted for

this service. He habitually blundered head foremost into the battle; and almost too obtuse to feel when he was struck, and too self-satisfied to doubt that his absurdities were argument, he burlesqued his cause, with the most undoubting conviction that he was doing it and himself immortal honour. His personal character was not of an order to make up for the deficiencies of his understanding. Born a Roman Catholic, he had discarded his belief, without any very public evidence that he had imbibed any other in its stead. The change had produced its fruits in the possession of parliamentary privileges and public rank; but the records of White's, and the symposia of the party, must be the vouchers for all that is to complete his biography. Burke knew that this was an antagonist beneath him; and perhaps he gave way rather rashly to his sense of injury, in condescending to notice this old encumberer of debate. But he was not in the habit of suffering any man to think that to attack him was a safe exercise, and he flung a loose shaft at the unlucky Duke of Norfolk, which startled his sense of security, if not of shame, and taught him the wisdom of fear for the future. At the close of his remarks, he says, "Amongst those gentlemen who come to authority, as soon, or sooner than they come of age, I do not mean to include his Grace. He has had a large share of experience. He certainly ought to understand the English Constitution better than I do. He had studied it in the fundamental part. For one election that I have seen, he has been *concerned* in twenty. Nobody is less of a

visionary—nobody has more drawn his speculations from practice. No *Peer* has condescended to watch with more vigilance the declining franchises of the poor Commons. 'With thrice great Hermes he has outwatched the Bear.' Often have his candles glimmered in the sockets, whilst he grew pale at his constitutional duties! Long nights has he wasted; long, laborious, shriftless journeys has he made, and great sums has he expended, in order to secure the *purity*, the *independence*, and the *sobriety* of elections."

But a new event stirred all the latent ire of party into animation. The King, influenced by a just sense of Burke's services to the empire in exposing conspiracy, extinguishing disaffection, and at once rousing and guiding the old national heart, awarded to him a pension of L.3700 a-year. The sum was liberal; but if national justice ever authenticated royal liberality, it was in this instance. Yet the outcry of Opposition was instantly let loose. Fox, who had squandered tens of thousands, thrown away in license of all kinds every shilling that he could get into his hands, lived at the gaming-table, and was at that moment subsisting on a *subscription!* was all astonishment, alike at the prodigal expenditure and the scandalous degradation. Sheridan! was indignant at the extravagance which could not comprehend the value of pounds, shillings, and pence. The Duke of Bedford, with a rent-roll of L.100,000 a-year, was bursting with wonder, to conceive *how* so capacious a sum as L. 3700 could be occupied in the comforts or uses of any individual, let

his merits be what they may. Francis, Duke of Bedford, whose grand demonstration of politics and patriotism was actually *to make his footmen comb the powder out of their locks*, that he might terrify Mr Pitt into resignation!—this was the man, who, in an unlucky hour for his own repose, set himself forward as the denouncer of Burke for accepting the acknowledgement of services, which no money could repay, from the justice of his Sovereign, and the gratitude of the empire.

The common suggestions of fact and reason, that Burke had earned public remuneration many a year before, even on the mere ground of official merits; that he had surrendered L.20,000 to the public, of the political perquisites of the Army Pay-Office; that his bill for the improvement of the public revenue, by abolishing useless offices, had produced a direct annual saving of L. 80,000 a-year—all passed unnoticed by those men of narrow notions and capacious patriotism. It was nothing in their view, that the sum was granted to a man, after thirty years of the most vigorous and brilliant efforts in public life,—efforts whose renown had illustrated the British name, as much as they had enlarged his own, in every region of the globe; that it was incapable of being taken as the pledge of corruption by a man who had *withdrawn entirely from Parliament;* that it was not beyond the income of a middling barrister, or the profits of a prosperous trader, and not a twentieth of the unearned income of the Duke of Bedford. The clamour was raised by party;

and the public saw, with equal disgust and surprise, the new moralists of the age starting up in their masquerade habits from the club, the gaming-table, and the race-course. Burke's remarks on this equally ungenerous, and hypocritical proceeding, were given to the public in his "Letter to a Noble Lord;" one of those performances, which, of itself, would be enough to fix the writer in the highest place of genius. We may be almost grateful to the aggressive folly which produced this noble retaliation. The barbarism, or the absurdity, of the assault, may well be forgiven, when we see the permanent grandeur and loftiness of the rampart thrown up for its repulse. He begins by acknowledging his *obligations* to the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale.* "Those noble per-

* The following notice of the church property confiscated for the use of the Russell family has been lately published:—

The first known ancestor of the Russells was a Hugh de Russell or Rosell, who, by mortgaging some lands in Normandy, followed the Conqueror with three knights and their attendants, a little troop of eleven. After a long lapse of years, we find the name mentioned in the instance of a John Russell, Private Secretary of a man of opulence of Plymouth, and by him introduced to the services of Philip, Archduke of Austria, who had been driven into that harbour by a storm. The Archduke was intriguing to form an alliance with Henry VII., by marrying his sister Catherine to Prince Henry. Russell was made gentleman of the privy chamber to the prince, and appears to have been left as the Archduke's creature. This was the founder of the family fortunes. First adopted as an agent of Wolsey in the corrupt delivery of Tournay to Francis I., on Wolsey's fall he succeeded to the royal favour. In 1539, he was created Baron Russell of Cheynes, in Buckinghamshire, and received, as a portion of the

sons have lost no time in conferring upon me that sort of honour which is alone within their competence. * * * * To have incurred the displeasure of the Duke

church spoil, the manor of Agmandesham. From this period, his life was one of the continued accession of church property. In 1540, he obtained the lands of the Abbey of St Runan at Tavistock, in Devon, with no less than 27 manors in Devon and Cornwall. Then the lands of the Monastery of Dunkersworth, in Devon, with a part of the lands belonging to the Abbey of St Albans, Herts; and the Hospital of St Leonard's, in Bedford.

In the regency of Somerset, also a period of church robbery, Russell was a member of the council, and he robbed with his accustomed vigour. He now laid his hand on the Abbey of Woburn, one of the greatest pieces of plunder ever effected by a subject,—the Abbey having supported a fraternity of 80 brethren, and feeding daily 1000 poor at their gates. At this one grasp nearly sixty manors in Bedfordshire, Oxford, and Northampton were seized. He was of the true order of politicians, for keeping himself out of all public hazards, but quietly gathering in all quarters, whoever fell, Russell robbed, and throve. Somerset, his great friend, perished on the scaffold. The wily John was only so much the better for this contingency, and by no means objected to take his share of the unfortunate Protector's spoils,—obtaining, in 1552, his part of the dissolved Monastery of Westminster, Covent Garden, Long Acre, and the district on which Bloomsbury, Russell Street, &c. are since built.

The family principle existed for every generation since. The peace of 1762 brought the name of the Duke of Bedford into national ill odour, by the extraordinary cession of the Havannah in exchange for Florida! Charges of corruption were loudly made by the popular organs; the abandonment of the finest city and island of the West Indies for a melancholy resort, then remote from all European intercourse, was wholly unaccountable, and scarcely ever attempted to be accounted for; and the stings of Junius were fixed thick and deep in the Noble Lord.

of Orleans or the Duke of Bedford, to fall under the censure of Citizen Brissot, or his *friend* Lord Lauderdale, I consider as proofs, not the least satisfactory, that I have produced some part of the effect I proposed by my endeavours. I have laboured hard to earn, what the noble lords are generous enough to repay. * * * * * Why will they not let me remain in obscurity and inaction? Are they apprehensive, that if an atom of me remains, the sect has something to fear? Must I be annihilated, lest, like old John Zisca's, my skin might be made into a drum, to animate Europe to eternal battle, against a tyranny that threatens to overwhelm all Europe and the human race?

"The Revolution of France seems to have extended even to the constitution of the mind of man. The moral scheme of France furnishes the only pattern ever known, which they who admire will instantly resemble. In my condition, though scarcely to be classed among the living, I am not safe from them. They have tigers to fall upon animated strength. They have hyænas to prey upon carcasses. The National Menagerie is collected by the first physiologists of the time; and it is defective in no description of savage nature. They pursue even such as I, into the obscurest retreats, and haul them before their revolutionary tribunals. They have so determined a hatred to all privileged orders, that they deny even to the departed the sad immunities of the grave. Their turpitude purveys to their malice; they *unplumb the dead for bullets to assassinate the living.* If all Revolutionists

were not proof against all caution, I should recommend it to their consideration, that no persons were ever known in history, either sacred or profane, to vex the sepulchre, and by their sorceries to call up the prophetic dead, with any other event than the prediction of their own disastrous fate. Leave me, oh, leave me to repose! In one thing I can excuse the Duke of Bedford for his attack upon me and my mortuary pension. He cannot comprehend the transaction he condemns. What I have obtained was the fruit of no bargain, the production of no intrigue, the result of no compromise, the effect of no solicitation. The first suggestion of it never came from *me*, mediately, or immediately, to his Majesty, or any of his Ministers. It was long known, that the instant my engagements would permit, and before the heaviest of all calamities had condemned me to obscurity and sorrow, I had resolved on a total retreat. *I had executed that design.* I was entirely out of the way of serving or hunting any statesman or party, before the Ministers carried into effect the spontaneous bounty of the Crown. Both descriptions have acted as became them. When I could no longer serve them, Ministers have considered my situation. When I could no longer hurt them, the Revolutionists have trampled on my infirmity."

With that application to first principles, which forms the charm, and makes the imperishable value of his writings, he then touches on the ground of public reward. "I decline his Grace's jurisdiction as a judge.

I challenge the Duke of Bedford as a juror upon the value of my services. I cannot recognize, in his *few and idle years*, the competence to judge of my long and laborious life. * * * * His Grace thinks I have obtained too much. I answer, that my exertions, whatever they have been, were such as no hope of pecuniary reward could possibly excite, and no pecuniary compensation can possibly reward them. Between money and such services, (if done by abler men than I am,) there is no common principle of comparison. They are qualities incommensurable. Money is made for the comfort and convenience of animal life. It *cannot* be a reward for what mere animal life must indeed sustain, but never can inspire. With submission to his Grace, I have not had more than sufficient. As to any noble use, I trust I know how to employ, as well as he, a much greater fortune than he possesses. When I say I have not received more than I deserve, is this the language I hold to Majesty? No. Before that presence I claim no merit at all. One style to a gracious benefactor; another to a proud and insulting foe."

In this language Burke states at once the maxim of a wise government, and the error of a foolish people. When the mean are the masters, money, the idol of the mean, is naturally supposed to be the measure of every thing. The mechanic measures the work of his hands by its worth in wages; the political charlatan transfers the handicraft principle to public life, and makes the workshop the standard of the Legislature. His universal

cry is Economy. Our armies may moulder away, and fleets perish; every enemy of the Empire may be encouraged to aggression,—the Economist sees nothing to alarm him but the pension list. The temple of those regenerators has no priest but the money-changer. A guinea more or less, with them turns the scale trembling with the fates of Empire. The whole system is founded on the old Jewry principle. Five hundred a-year curtailed from the pension list is a victory which these men think deserving of all the honours of triumphant patriotism. Envy and malice, aided by the true Republican uncharitableness, which suspects every man to be a villain on the first opportunity, are their "whole and sincere motives." To a low mind, to a party mendicant, to a miserable struggler for influence, which he finds always withheld where his claims are to be tried on the standard of ability and honour; no enjoyment is equal to that of proving that he can molest, if he cannot wound; that if he cannot degrade the name of the man whose talents throw him into perpetual contempt, he can at least narrow his income; that if his arguments are cast back helplessly upon himself, he can at least be felt in his arithmetic, and mulct his lofty scorner in the shape of so many shillings patriotically shorn from his subsistence! But all this is no less injurious than contemptible. The object of England must be to have first-rate men; and to have the whole time and thought, the whole heart and mind, of those men. Money must be an entirely subordinate consideration. Money ceases

to be an element, when the calculation is of the fate of Empires and posterity. In the presence of things of such overwhelming magnitude, salaries and personal means fall into dust, and are nothing. The wisdom of one man averts a war, which would have cost us a hundred millions of money.—The intelligence of another establishes a commercial code, which covers the land with activity.—The valour of a third sends his spirit into the fainting glories of the land, coerces victory, and brings home the national banner covered with inscriptions of triumph, and waving in the acclamations of the world.—The eloquence of a fourth, accomplishing a still more capacious success, tramples down revolutionary violence at home, puts it to shame abroad, and throwing light at once on the evil and the good, withers the treachery, by the same flash which clears the face of heaven to the fortunes of the Empire What money could produce such services, or what money could recompense them? But its privation may cramp and distract the powers and the uses of such men. This pitiful policy will soon reason itself into the advantage of making our couriers travel on foot, fighting our battles with damaged gunpowder, and dismantling our ships until the battle is to be fought in the chops of the Channel. The public man who is uneasy in his personal circumstances, is, so far, compelled to withdraw his mind from the service of the State. The public man who feels that the decent expenditure of his station is rapidly sinking him into difficulties. The public man whose eyes cannot fall upon the circle

of his family without thinking of the certain difficulty, if not the actual destitution which must be their lot, aggravated too by their fall from the station of their father, must have painful thoughts obtruding themselves on the hour when on his undivided council may hang the fate of his country—may have prognostics and fears driving sleep from his pillow, and withering into an early grave the heart, every pulse of which should have been given to the glory and the good of mankind. Pitt died at forty-seven, overwhelmed with debt. No man could charge this greatest of all British Statesmen with personal waste; no gaming-table, no stud, no dissipated banqueting, no pomp of expenditure, could be alleged against this virtuous and high-minded man. Yet it is clear that his means were too narrow for his situation. None could be too magnificent for his services. We cannot enter into the recesses of the great statesman's mind; but who shall say, how far the sense of this condition of his affairs might not be among the causes of a death, thus occurring in the vigour of life? Pitt's *elder* brother survived him thirty years! What invaluable services might not have been obtained from the living mind of Pitt during the long vicissitudes of Europe, since the day that saw him laid in the grave, with his principle, his purity, his fortitude matured by the experience of thirty years! From what humiliating changes of party might not the national character have been defended; from what gross degradations of public men, issuing in what fatal inroads on the constitution, might we not have been

rescued? From what rising atrocities of Republicanism, again gathering its folds, and lifting its crested head over the struggling liberty of the land, might we not have been delivered by the strong hand which crushed its neck, in what was scarcely more than the infancy of his political being?

Burke, in allusion to his own efforts in the reduction of the sinecures of the Civil List Establishment, states that he had found two opinions on the subject. One pronounced all change absurd, from the complication of the abuse; another would sweep all away at once. "Nothing but coarse amputation, or coarser taxation, was talked of. Blind zeal, or factious fury, were the whole contribution brought by the most noisy on the occasion." He then finely observes, in that style in which his imagination sustains his reason, and a splendid allusion is invigorated into a convincing argument, —"Let me tell my youthful censor, that the necessities of that time required something very different from what others then suggested, or what his Grace now conceives. Let me inform him, that it was one of the most critical periods in our annals. Astronomers have supposed, that if a certain comet, whose path intercepted the ecliptic, had met the earth in some (I forget what) sign, it would have whirled us along with it in its eccentric course, into heaven knows what regions of heat and cold. Had the portentous comet of the 'Rights of Man,' which 'from its horrid hair shakes pestilence and war, and with fear of change perplexes monarchs,' crossed upon us in that

internal state of England, nothing human could have prevented our being hurried into all the vices, crimes, horrors, and miseries of the French Revolution. * * * * Happily, France was not then jacobinized—her hostility was at a good distance. We had a limb cut off, but we preserved the body. There was much intestine heat, there was a dreadful fermentation. Wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods, and prowled about our streets in the shape of Reform. Many of the changes, by a great misnomer called Parliamentary Reforms, went, in their certain and not very remote effect, home to the utter destruction of the constitution of the kingdom. Had they taken place, not France, but England, would have had the honour of leading up the death-dance of democratic Revolution. * * * * At that time I was connected with men of high place in the community. They loved liberty, at least as much as the Duke of Bedford can do, and they understood it at least as well. The liberty they pursued was a liberty inseparable from order, morals, and religion, and was neither hypocritically nor fanatically followed. They did not wish that liberty, in itself the first of blessings, should in its perversion become the greatest curse that could fall upon mankind. * * * * The desires of the people (partly natural, and partly infused into them by art) appeared in so wild and inconsiderate a manner, with regard to the economical object, (I set aside the dreadful tampering with the body of the constitution itself,) that if their petitions had been literally complied with, the State

would have been convulsed, and a gate would have been opened through which all property might be ravaged."

He then strikes out more broadly into the general question. "It cannot at this time be too often repeated, line upon line, and precept upon precept, until it comes into the currency of a proverb, *To innovate is not to reform.* The French Revolutionists complained of every thing. They refused to *reform* any thing; they left nothing *unchanged.* The consequences are before us—not in remote history, not in future prognostication—they are about us, they are upon us. They shake public security, they menace private enjoyment, they dwarf the young, they break the quiet of the old. Knowledge is rendered worse than ignorance, by the enormous evils of this dreadful innovation. The Revolution harpies of France, sprung from Night and Hell, or from that chaotic anarchy which generates 'all monstrous, all prodigious things,' hatch their eggs in the nest of every neighbouring state." He then gives a passing look at his Grace of Bedford. "I was not, like his Grace, swaddled, and rocked, and dandled into a legislator. '*Nitor in adversum*' is the motto for a man like me. I possessed not one of the qualities, nor cultivated one of the arts, that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion, or a tool. As little did I follow the *trade* of winning the hearts, by imposing on the understandings of the people. At every step of my progress in life, (for at every step I was tra-

versed and opposed,) and at every turnpike I met, I was forced to shew my passport."

He now comes more directly to the Duke's charge, and retorts it with an effect which must have made that nobleman wish the day of his unlucky speech blotted out of the calendar. " The Duke of Bedford conceives that he is obliged to call the attention of the House of Peers to his Majesty's grant to me, which he considers as excessive. I know not how it has happened, but it seems that, while his Grace was meditating his well-considered censure upon me, he fell into a sort of sleep. Homer nods, and the Duke of Bedford may dream; and as dreams (even his golden dreams) are apt to be incongruously put together, his Grace preserved the idea of reproach to *me*, but took the subject from the Crown grants to *his own family*. In that way of putting things together his Grace is perfectly right. The grants to the house of Russell were so enormous, as not only to outrage all economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the Leviathan among all the creatures of the Crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the Royal bounty. Huge as he is, and while he ' lies floating many a rood,' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray; every thing of him and about him is from the throne. Is it for *him* to question the dispensation of the Royal favour? * * * * It would be not gross

adulation, but uncivil irony, to say that he has *any public merit of his own*, to keep alive the idea of the services by which his vast landed *pensions* were obtained. It is his ancestor, the original pensioner, that has laid up this inexhaustible fund of merit, which makes his Grace so very delicate about the merit of all other grantees of the Crown. * * * * The first Peer of the name, the first purchaser of the grants, was a Mr Russell, a person of an ancient gentleman's family, raised by being *a minion* of Henry VIII. The first of those immoderate grants was taken, not from the ancient demesne of the Crown, but from the recent confiscations of the nobility of the land. The lion, having sucked the blood of his prey, threw the offal carcass to the jackall in waiting. Having once tasted the food of confiscation, the favourite became fierce and ravenous. This worthy favourite's first grant was made from the lay nobility. The second, infinitely improving on the enormity of the first, was from the plunder of the Church. In truth, his Grace is somewhat excusable in his dislike to a grant like mine, not only in its quantity, but in its kind, so different from his own.

"Mine was from a mild and benevolent Sovereign. His was from Henry VIII.

"Mine had not its fund in the murder of any innocent person of illustrious rank, or in the pillage of any body of unoffending men. His grants were from the consolidated funds of judgments iniquitously *legal*, and from possessions voluntarily surrendered by their owners, with the *gibbet at their door*. The merit of

the original grantee from whom he derives, was that of being a prompt and greedy instrument of a *levelling* tyrant. The merit of the original grantee was, in giving his hand to the work, and partaking the spoil with a Prince who plundered the national Church. His founder's merits were, by acts in which he served his master and made his fortune, to bring poverty, wretchedness, and depopulation, upon his country. His founder's merit was, that of a gentleman raised by the arts of a Court, and the protection of a Wolsey, to eminence. His merit in that eminence was, by instigating a tyrant to injustice, to provoke a people to rebellion. The political merit of the first pensioner of his Grace's house, was, that of being concerned, as a Counsellor of State, in advising, and in his person executing, the conditions of a dishonourable peace with France; the surrendering the fortress of Boulogne, then our outguard upon the continent. By that surrender, Calais, the key of France, and the bridle in the mouth of that power, was, not many years afterwards, finally lost. The labour of his Grace's founder merited the curses, not loud but deep, of the Commons of England, in whom he and his master had effected a complete *Parliamentary Reform*, by making them, in their slavery and humiliation, the true and adequate representatives of a debased, degraded, and undone people. * * * * Let the Duke of Bedford reject with scorn and horror, the counsels of the lecturers; those wicked panders to avarice and ambition, who would tempt him, in the troubles of his country, to seek

another enormous fortune in the forfeitures of another nobility, and the plunder of another Church. * * * * Then will he forget the rebellions which, by a doubtful priority in crime, his ancestor had proved and extinguished. * * * *

"The Crown has considered *me* after long services. The Crown has paid the Duke of Bedford in advance. He has had a long credit for any service which he may perform *hereafter*. But let him beware how he endangers that constitution which secures his own utility or his own insignificance. The learned professors of the 'rights of men,' regard prescription not as a title to bar all claim, set up against all possession, but as itself a bar against the possessor. Such are their ideas, such their religion, such their law. But, to our country and our race, so long as the well-compacted structure of our Church and State, the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies of that ancient Law, defended by reverence, defended by power, at once a fortress and a temple, shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Zion; as long as the British monarchy, not more limited than fenced by the Orders of the State, shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers, coerce and guard the subject land; so long the mounds and dikes of the *low, fat Bedford level* will have nothing to fear from all the pickaxes of all the *levellers* of France. * * * But if the rude inroad of Gallic tumult, with its sophistical rights of man, to falsify the account, and its sword as a makeweight to throw into the scale, shall

be introduced into our city by a misguided populace, set on by proud, great men, themselves blinded and intoxicated by a frantic ambition, we shall, all of us, perish, and be overwhelmed in a common ruin. If a great storm blow on our coast, it will cast the whales on our strand, as well as the periwinkles. His Grace will not survive the grantee he despises; no, not a twelvemonth. If the great look for safety in the services they render to the Gallic cause, it is to be foolish even above *the privilege allowed to wealth.*"

The loss of his son had broken the heart of Burke, and in the midst of all his thoughts of patriotism, he reverts perpetually to this touching recollection. Like some shade of the departed, the image of his dead son starts up before him wherever he turns his step, no matter in what great affairs he may be occupied; whether his foot be in the palace or the council; whether he address the Sovereign, or confound, with indignant eloquence and prophetic rebuke, the revolutionary multitude and their profligate leaders; the form of his son always moves before his sight, and he always acknowledges it, as beckoning him to the grave. In others, this perpetual grief might be unmanly, because it would *unman.* In Burke's powerful and philosophic mind it diminished nothing of power, of generous zeal, or lofty perseverance. It solemnized and sanctified. With the energies of his original genius it palpably mingled the elevation of sacred feeling. From this time, the bold partisan, the vigorous actor in public life, had disappeared. His views

are more general, less concerned for triumph than for truth; and disposed, as he was, by nature, to this expansion of view, and making obvious advances towards it in every successive period of his public career, it was now alone that he attained the full dignity and purity of his powers. The same blow which had laid his son in the tomb, severed the last link which bound him to the localities of public life. The fetter fell away from him, and his spirit at once sprang up above all the mists and obstacles which had before narrowed the circle of his vision.—The world was now for him; and he was for the world.

"Had it pleased God," he says, with melancholy pride, "to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity, and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family. I should have left a son, who, in all the points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in honour, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment, and every liberal accomplishment, would not have shewn himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon this provision which belonged more to mine than me. He soon would have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrized every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor to resort to any *stagnant, wasting reservoir of merit in me*, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived he

would have re-purchased the bounty of the Crown, and ten times more. He was made a public creature, and had no enjoyment whatever but in the performance of some duty. At this exigent moment, the loss of a finished man is not easily supplied."

Then follows the passage which has been so often panegyrized, and which, like some triumphal arch of Rome, at once a trophy, and an emblem of mortality, superb and pathetic, will sustain, by the richness of its workmanship, all the admiration that can be lavished on its architect, from age to age. "But, a Disposer, whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it behoves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm has gone over me, and I lie, like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours—I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth. There, and prostrate there, I most unfeignedly recognize the Divine justice. But, while I humble myself before God, I do not know that it is forbidden to repel the attacks of unjust and inconsiderate men. The patience of Job is proverbial; after some of the convulsive struggles of our irritable nature, he submitted himself, and repented in dust and ashes; but even so, I do not find him blamed for reprehending those ill-natured neighbours of his, who visited his dunghill to read moral, political, and economical, lectures on his misery. I

am alone, I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. * * * I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me have gone before me. They who should have been to me as posterity, are in the place of ancestors. I owe to the dearest relation (which ever must subsist in memory) that act of piety which he would have performed for me. I owe to him to shew that he was not descended from an unworthy parent."

After this tribute to his feelings he returns to what he considered as his duty. He adverts to the follies of his accuser, and makes them the groundwork of important advice to all men of rank, who, stooping to intrigue, for party purposes, are blind to the palpable fact, that *they* would be the first victims of a popular revolution. "Surely it is proper that the Duke of Bedford, and others like him, should know the true genius of this sect. He ought to know, that with them the *whole duty of man* consists in *destruction.* They are a misallied and disparaged branch of the house of Nimrod. They are the Duke of Bedford's *natural hunters*, and he is their natural game. Because he is not very profoundly reflecting, he sleeps in profound security. They, on the contrary, are always vigilant, active, enterprising. In Revolution every thing is new, and from want of preparation, every thing is dangerous. Never before, as in France, was a set of literary men converted into a gang of robbers and assassins. Never before did a den of bravoes and ban-

ditti assume the garb and tone of an academy of philosophers. Let me tell his Grace, that an union of such characters, monstrous as it may seem, is not made for producing despicable enemies. The men of property in France, confiding in a force which seemed to be irresistible, because it had never been tried, neglected to prepare for a conflict with their enemies at their own weapons. They were found in such a situation as the Mexicans, when they were attacked by the dogs, the cavalry, the iron, and the gunpowder, of a handful of bearded men, whom they did not know to exist in nature. In France they had their enemies within their houses, but they had not sagacity to discover their savage character. They seemed tame, and even caressing. They had nothing but *douce humanité* in their mouth. They could not bear the punishment of the mildest laws on the greatest criminals. The slightest severity of justice made their flesh creep. The very idea that war existed in the world, disturbed their repose. Military glory, with them, was no more than a splendid infamy. All this while they meditated the massacres and confiscations which we have seen. Had any one told those unfortunate noblemen and gentlemen, how and by whom the grand fabric of the French monarchy would be subverted, they would have pitied him as a visionary. Yet we have seen what has happened. The persons who have suffered from the cannibal philosophy of France, are so like the Duke of Bedford, that nothing but his Grace's probably not speaking quite so good French, could en-

able us to find out any difference. A great many of them had as pompous titles as he, and were of full as illustrious a race. A few of them had fortunes as ample; several of them (without meaning any disparagement to the Duke of Bedford) were as wise, and as virtuous, and as valiant, and as complete in all the lineaments of men of honour, as he is. And to all this, they added the powerful outguard of a military profession, which, in its nature, renders men somewhat more cautious than those who have nothing to attend to but the lazy enjoyment of undisturbed possessions. But security was their ruin. They are dashed to pieces in the storm, and our shores are covered with their wrecks. If they had been aware that such a thing might happen, such a thing never could have happened."

He then turns to the effect of revolutionary principlesin England. His observations are true, to this hour, and should operate as a living warning to the peers and to the people, if both are not to be sunk in the gulf of confiscation and massacre. "I can assure his Grace," says his powerful, and perhaps pitying, rebuker, "that the Frenchified faction, more encouraged than others are warned, by what has happened in France, look at him and his landed possessions as an object at once of curiosity and rapacity. He is made for them in every part of their character. As robbers to them he is a noble booty, as speculatists he is a glorious subject for their philosophy. Those philosophers are *fanatics*. I am better able, than the noble Duke can be, to enter into the character of this

description of men. I have lived long and variously in the world. Without any considerable pretensions to literature in myself, I have aspired to the love of letters. I have lived for a great many years in habitudes with those who professed them. I can form a tolerable estimate of what is likely to happen from such a character, chiefly dependent for fame and fortune on knowledge and talent, as well in its morbid and perverted state, as in that which is sound and natural. Naturally, men so formed are the first gifts of Providence to the world. But, when they have *once thrown off the fear of God*, which was in all ages too often the case; and the fear of man, which is now the case; and when, in that state, they come to understand one another, and to act in corps, a more dreadful calamity cannot arise out of hell to scourge mankind. *Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician.* It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked Spirit, than to the frailty and passion of a man. It is, like the principle of Evil himself, incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defecated evil."

It is remarkable that this great searcher of the heart of faction almost anticipates the peculiar shape of mischief, which, under the name of philosophy, is now preparing the work of ruin throughout Europe. Burke strikingly awakes us to its universal principle,—that the future is every thing, the present nothing; and that misery, famine, and death are not merely a natural,

but a necessary purchase for some Utopian benefit which exists only for generations to come. Refining on that loose theory, which so undeservedly raised its propagators into a temporary name—that population was a national calamity, to be cured only by a providential curse; (God relieving man from the *misfortune* of the original blessing of "increase and multiply," by the "vice and misery" which are the direct violation of his commands.) Of all theories the shallowest, yet in its day received with a rapture worthy of political economy, the universal answer of the smiling philosopher is—Wait a while. All will come round. There must be pressure somewhere, but all is calculated; and in fifty or a hundred years, you shall see that we have secured the universal supply of shoe-ties, all the tape and thread-making, the grand monopoly of the button-twisting of Europe.

"These persons," said Burke, "have a means of compromising with the humanity of their nature. It is not dissolved. They only give it a long prorogation. They are ready to declare that they do not think two thousand years too long a period for the good that they pursue. It is remarkable that they never see any way to their projected good but by the road of some evil. Their imagination is not fatigued with the contemplation of human suffering through the wild waste of centuries, added to centuries of misery and desolation. *Their humanity is at the horizon, and, like the horizon, it always flies before them.* Those philosophers

consider men, in their experiments, no more than they do mice in an exhausted receiver, or in a recipient of mephitic gas. Whatever his Grace may think of himself, they look upon him, and upon every thing that belongs to him, with no more regard than they do upon the whiskers of that little, long-tailed animal, that has long been the game of the grave, demure, insidious, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed philosophers, whether going upon two legs or upon four. His Grace's landed possessions are irresistibly inviting to an *Agrarian* experiment. They are a downright insult upon the rights of man. They are more extensive than the territory of many of the Grecian republics. There is a scope for seven philosophers to proceed in their analytical experiments upon Harrington's seven forms of Republics, in the acres of this one Duke. * * * Abbé Sièyes has whole nests of pigeon-holes, full of constitutions ready-made, ticketed, sorted, and numbered, suited to every season and every fancy; some with the top of the pattern at the bottom, and some with the bottom at the top; some of blood colour, some of *boue de Paris;* some with directories, others without; some with councils of elders, some with councils of youngsters, some without any council at all; some where the electors choose the representatives, some where the representatives choose the electors; some in long coats, some in short; some in pantaloons; some without breeches; some with five-shilling qualifications, some totally unqualified; so that no constitu-

tion fancier may go unsuited from his shop, provided he loves a pattern of pillage, oppression, arbitrary imprisonment, exile, confiscation, revolutionary judgment, and legalized premeditated murder, in any shapes into which they can be put. What a pity it is that their progress of experimental philosophy should be checked by his Grace's monoply. * * * * * Is the genius of philosophy not yet known? Deep philosophers are no triflers. Brave sansculottes are no formalists. They will no more regard a Marquis of Tavistock than an Abbot of Tavistock. The Lord of Woburn will not be more respectable in their eyes than the Prior of Woburn. They will make no difference between a Covent Garden of nuns and a Covent Garden of another description. They will not care a rush whether the colour of his coat be purple, or blue and buff."

The Duke's dilettante farming furnishes him with a new figure of contempt. "Their only question will be, that of Legendre, or some other of their Legislative butchers, how he cuts up, how he tallows in the caul, or on the kidneys. Is it not a singular phenomenon, that while the sansculotte butchers, and the philosophers of the shambles, are pricking their dotted lines upon his hide; and (like the print of the poor ox that we see in the shop windows at Charing Cross,) alive as he is, and thinking no harm in the world, he is divided into rumps, and sirloins, and briskets, and into all sorts of pieces for roasting, boiling, and stewing; that all the while they are measuring *him*, he is measur-

ing *me*—is invidiously comparing the bounty of the Crown with the deserts of the defender of his order, and in the same moment fawning on those who have the knife half out of the sheath,—*poor innocent!*

> ‘ Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
> And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.’ ”

## CHAPTER VIII.

Revolutionary War—Letters on a Regicide Peace—True Principle of British Success—Nature of Party—Policy of the Revolution of 1688.

THE life of Burke is remarkably distinguishable by epochs.—His appointment to the private secretaryship of Hamilton,—his entrance into the House of Commons,—his secession from the Whigs,—and the loss of his son, all characterise periods, from each of which his career assumed a totally distinct colour. He was now in voluntary and final retirement; the death of Richard Burke had scarcely more separated that lamented person from the world, than his father. From this time the ardent and daring speculator was transmuted into the calm and lofty philosopher. His language is touched by the tomb; it has the solemn dignity and pure fervour of a devotional offering. Even where it is nerved by indignation at public vice, or labours with alarm and anxiety at public danger, its cha-

racter is reflective; it deals with man less as the instrument or the victim of temporary party, than as the object of supreme justice. In the wilder convulsions of European polity, Burke seems to look upon the general collision from a superior sphere. He unquestionably saw with a clearer vision than any of his contemporaries the principles of those changes, and pronounced upon them with a firmer and more decisive wisdom. On looking over the general productions of his day, we frequently find eloquence, and sometimes powerful anticipations of the good or evil forthcoming. But we find them flung out with the confused and mystic indecision of a pagan oracle. Burke drew his political wisdom from a higher source than the tripod where Faction sat, inflated and frenzied with blasts from the subterranean cells of treason. His oracles were the high inspiration of a powerful understanding, guided by a sincere heart, and both, at this time, elevated to clearer views, even by the fatal blow which had disunited the patriot and the man of genius from all his old connexion with the passions of men.

But the death of his son had neither impaired Burke's actual vigour of mind, nor diminished his original interest in the concerns of the empire. With Party he never more descended into the field; but, when the sound of national danger reached him in his retreat, no man was more ready to shake off his dejection, and rush to the front of the encounter. He had now wholly withdrawn from public business; he saw none of his public friends, scarcely any private society; and his

chief employment was in protecting and modelling a school established within a few miles of Beaconsfield, for the orphan sons of the French emigrants. This dejection was altogether real; he was no chagrined statesman, affecting independence. He was equally far from the common affectation, of disdaining the honours and emoluments of society, under a real sense of their having escaped his ambition. He was, as he described himself, a heart-broken old man, who, having ventured his last stake of human happiness on one object, and having lost it, believed that he had nothing more to do, than to prepare to follow. In a letter, written subsequently to a friend who proposed taking a distinguished French Noble to visit him, he declines the proposal in this language: "Alas! my dear friend, I am not what I was two years ago. Society is too much for my nerves. I sleep ill at night; and am drowsy, and sleep much in the day. Every exertion of spirits which I make for the society which I cannot refuse, costs me much, and leaves me doubly heavy and dejected after it. Such is the person you come to see; or rather the wreck of what has never been a very first-rate vessel. Such as I am, I feel infinitely for the kindness of those old friends who remember me with compassion; as to new, I never see one, but such French as come to visit the school, which supplies to me the void in my own family, and is my only comfort. For the sake of that, I still submit to see some who are still more miserable than I am."

But this great man was speedily to furnish a proof

of the inherent strength of his intellect, and of the living sensibility with which he felt for the cause of England as the cause of mankind.

The war with France had been begun by the unanimous impulse of all that constituted the virtue, manliness, and public principle of the Empire. The murder of the unhappy Louis, and the more than murder, the long and detestable atrocities which embittered the last hours, of Marie Antoinette; a woman once all but worshipped, and deserving of every homage that could be paid to dignity of mind, and innocence of heart, had roused all England into a solemn and resolute desire to be totally separated from connexion with a people covered with blood. England still had her Jacobins; but their voices were lost in the general burst of horror; rebellion hid its head for the time, and loyalty was universal. The first successes of the war justified and sustained the national feeling. The Republican armies were broken, driven within their own frontier, and chased from camp to camp within that frontier. The great triple line of fortresses, which had so long been boasted of as the iron bulwark of France, as the perfection of military art, and impregnable to all European force, had been penetrated and seized; the Allied armies had advanced to within ten marches of the capital, and the Jacobin government was on the point of dissolution. But this scene was suddenly clouded. Some fatality, to this hour scarcely accounted for, checked the invasion, and thenceforth all was disaster. In less than two years the French armies changed from tumul-

tuary levies into hosts of disciplined troops, led by daring officers, organized with the utmost skill of a military age, and guided by the genius of a man pre-eminent for the union of boldness and science, the celebrated Carnot. In those disasters the British troops suffered but little; their singular gallantry saving them from serious reverses. But the ranks of the German armies were desolated, and the weight of the war was evidently turning upon Britain. In this crisis, disaffection, the love of change, and the natural horror of the daily expenditure of human life, raised a sudden outcry against the war. Opposition, headed by Fox, haughtily taunted the Minister with the result of measures, which had owed their failure only to the weakness or corruption of foreigners. The commercial interest, always sensitive to public hazard, gave the weight of wealth to the rising party; and that small but fierce faction, on whose first risings Pitt had set his heel, but which had still nurtured its unmitigable venom for the time of public evil, now raised its head again, and prepared to irritate and poison the public mind. Even in the Cabinet all was not sincere. Pitt was compelled to work with instruments tempered of metal that sometimes shivered in his hand. He had round him some men, who relied on art to supply the deficiency of talent, and some who even in the highest confidence of ambition could not forget the underhand sagacity of intrigue; well-wishers to the Minister, yet not hostile to his opponents; building their political conduct on the principle that Fox might yet sit on the Treasury bench;

adepts in *moderate* attachment, gentle treachery, and pledges which bound to nothing. The time was come for those men to make their bargain; and the leaning towards Opposition became palpable, in exact proportion with its growing influence. The knowledge of this progress in public shame reached Burke in his solitude, and it filled him with the indignation of a patriot and a man of honour. The prospect of a French negotiation opened before his eye only a vista of public disgrace; he could contemplate in it nothing but Ministerial disappointment and Jacobinical victory; he felt too that France wanted every element of sound negotiation; that the perpetual change of her principles extinguished every species of rational reliance on her engagements; and that even the perpetual havoc of her factions rendered it impossible to say with which the negotiation begun was to be concluded.

Whiggism, too, again took its share in increasing the dangers of the country. Its language was a perpetual panegyric of Fance, yet, no European nation had ever exhibited the aspect with which France then confronted the general eye. With every feature of her visage grim with murder, her lips hurling defiance alike at earth and heaven, and her hands grasping at the plunder of every kingdom of Europe, none but the judicially mad, or the wilfully corrupt, could plead, that her putting on the mock costume of peace could justify civilized empires in admitting this maniac and robber within the congresses and assemblies, where law was to be paramount, and where provision was to be

made for the interests of civilized man. The frightful rapidity with which the successive governments of the Republic destroyed each other, had, from the commencement of the Revolution, constituted a complete answer to all proposals of treaty. In a debate, in 1793, on Fox's motion for an address for peace with France, Burke's reply was irresistible. "Let us consider," said he, in an indignant tone, "of the *possibility* of negotiation. Supposing that England were to send an embassador to the Sans-Culotte Convention, to make the *amende honorable*, in a white sheet, at the bar of their meeting, and, by way of approximating to their system of equality, confer that agreeable and honourable office on some nobleman of high rank; how are we sure that he would not be saluted *à la Santerre*, holding the bloody head of Louis XVI. as an example to all sovereigns?

"Would you have him next apply to Monsieur le Brun? Unfortunately, the fellow is in jail, and it may be very uncertain whether they would consent to grant him a day rule. Would you apply to the minister Clavierre? You would then have *non est inventus* returned upon the back of the writ; for, it seems, he is not to be found. Would you have recourse to Roland? Why, he is not only in jail, but his wife is in jail with him, and she is said to be the real minister. Apply to Brissot, who has so many friends in this country, and let your ambassador take care that he leaves his watch behind him. But here again, Brissot is in jail, bearing a repetition of that sort of mis-

fortune to which it is to be hoped that habit has reconciled him. Pay your addresses to Egalité, and you will find him in his dungeon at Marseilles, sighing at the reflection of those hopes which he once entertained of being lieutenant-general of the crown of France. There then remains only my celebrated friend, the mild and merciful Marat, whom a negotiator might address with excellent effect, if he carried credentials from me. Such are the list of sovereigns who are to receive the submission of the British nation."

His thoughts were immediately directed to the means of counteracting the Whig intrigues which would have laid England at the foot of her mortal enemy. This labour occupied him during the summer of 1796; and no labour of his long and active career was more magnificently productive. It appeared in the shape of the two celebrated "Letters on a Regicide Peace." The former of those was on the Overtures for Peace; the latter, on the character and spirit of the French Revolution. He begins by alluding to the depression which had succeeded to the first manly feeling of the Empire. This depression strikes him as not belonging to the natural order, nor to the intelligent impulses, of the national mind. But he looks upon its existence as much the most formidable symptom of the time. "The disastrous events," he observes, "which have followed one upon another, in a long, unbroken, funereal train;" were not the principal causes of the disheartening view which he was

compelled to take of the public condition; he "fears more from what threatened to fail within, than what menaced to oppress us from abroad," and pronounces, with combined dignity of language and philosophic truth, that, "To a people who have once been proud and great, and great because they were proud, a change in the national spirit is the most terrible of all revolutions."

On the common analogy of Nature, which is so idly adopted as proof, in the instance of Empire, he has the fine and clear-sighted observation—"I am not quite of the mind of those speculators, who seem assured that necessarily, and by the constitution of things, all States have the same periods of infancy, manhood, and decrepitude, that are found in the individuals who compose them. The objects which are thus attempted to be forced into an analogy, are *not found in the same classes of existence.* Individuals are physical beings, subject to laws universal and invariable. But commonwealths are not physical, *but moral essences.* They are artificial combinations, and in their proximate efficient cause, are the arbitrary productions of the human mind. *We are not yet acquainted with the laws,* which necessarily influence the stability of that kind of work, made by that kind of agent. There is *not* in the physical order (with which they do not appear to hold *any assignable connexion*) a distinct cause by which any of those fabrics must necessarily grow, flourish, or decay. I doubt whether the history of mankind is *complete enough,* to furnish grounds for a sure theory on

the internal causes which necessarily affect the fortunes of a State. I am far from denying the operation of such causes. But they are infinitely uncertain, and much more obscure, and much more difficult to trace, than the foreign causes that tend to raise, depress, and sometimes to overwhelm a community."

He then proceeds, in the spirit of an ancient sage, to expand his theorem. The passage reminds us of some of the rich effusions of Plato. "It is often impossible, in those enquiries, to find any proportion between the apparent force of the moral causes, and their known operation. We are, therefore, obliged to deliver up that operation to mere chance, or, more piously and more rationally, to the occasional interposition and irresistible hand of the Great Disposer. We have seen States of considerable duration, which, for ages, have remained nearly as they have begun, and can hardly be said to ebb or flow. Some appear to have spent their vigour at their commencement. Some have blazed out in their glory a little before their extinction. The meridian of some has been the most splendid. Others, and they the greater number, have fluctuated, and experienced at different periods of their existence, a great variety of fortune. At the very moment when some of them seemed plunged in unfathomable abysses of disgrace and disaster, they have suddenly emerged; they have begun a new course, and opened a new reckoning, and even in the very depths of their calamity, and on the very ruins of their country, have laid the foundations of a towering and

durable greatness. All this has happened without any apparent previous change in the general circumstances which had brought on their distress. The death of a man at a critical juncture, his disgust, his retreat, his disgrace, have brought innumerable calamities on a whole nation. A common soldier, a child, a girl at the door of an inn, have changed the face of fortune, and almost of nature."

From thus laying down the general principles, he strikingly reverts to the case of the French monarchy. "Such, and often influenced by such causes, has commonly been the fate of monarchies of long duration. They have their ebbs and their flows. This has been eminently the fate of the monarchy of France. There have been times in which no power has ever been brought so low; few have ever flourished in greater glory. By turns elevated and depressed, that power had been on the whole, rather on the increase; and it continued not only powerful, but formidable, to the hour of the total ruin of the monarchy. The fall of the monarchy was far from being preceded by any exterior symptoms of decline; the interior was not visible to every eye; and a thousand accidents might have prevented the operation of what the most clear-sighted were not able to discern, nor the most provident to divine. A very little time before its dreadful catastrophe, there was a kind of exterior splendour in the situation of the Crown, which usually adds to Government strength and authority at home. The Crown seemed then to have obtained some of the most splen-

did objects of State ambition. None of the continental powers of Europe were the enemies of France. They were all either tacitly disposed to her, or publicly connected with her. The British nation, her great preponderating rival, she had humbled; to all appearance, she had weakened, certainly had endangered, by cutting off a very large, and by far the most growing, part of her empire. In that, its acmé of human prosperity, in the high and palmy state of the monarchy of France, it fell to the ground without a struggle. It fell, without any of those vices in the monarch which have sometimes been the causes of the fall of kingdoms; but which existed, without any visible effect on the State, in the highest degree, in many other princes, and, far from destroying their power, had only left some slight stains on their character. The financial difficulties were only pretexts and instruments of those who accomplished the ruin of the monarchy. *They were not the causes of it.*"

Then comes forth from the ruin the Republic, the monstrous offspring of Infidelity by Ambition, the fearful shape engendered by the Spirit of all evil in its union with the gross abomination of sensual France. "Deprived of the old government—deprived, in a manner, of all government—France, fallen as a monarchy, to common speculators might have appeared more likely to be an object of pity or insult, according to the disposition of the circumjacent powers, than to be the scourge and terror of them all. But out of

the tomb of the murdered monarchy in France has arisen a vast, tremendous, unformed spectre, in a far more terrific guise than any which has ever yet overpowered the imagination, and subdued the fortitude of man. Going straight-forward to the end, unappalled by peril, unchecked by remorse, despising all common maxims and all common means, this hideous phantom overpowered those who could not believe it possible that it could at all exist. * * * * But the poison of other States is the food of the new Republic. That bankruptcy, the very apprehension of which was one of the causes assigned for the fall of the monarchy, was the capital on which she opened her traffic with the world. The Republic of Regicide, with an annihilated revenue, with defaced manufactures, with a ruined commerce, with an uncultivated and half-depopulated country, with a discontented, distressed, enslaved, and famished people, passing with a rapid, eccentric, incalculable course from the wildest anarchy to the sternest despotism, has actually conquered the finest parts of Europe, has distressed, disunited, and broke to pieces the rest; and so subdued the minds of the rulers in every nation, that hardly any resource presents itself to them, except that of entitling themselves to a contemptuous mercy by a display of their meanness. Even in their greatest military efforts, and the greatest display of their fortitude, they seem not to hope, they do not even appear to wish, the extinction of what subsists only to their certain ruin. Their

ambition is only to be admitted to a more favoured class in the order of servitude under that domineering power."

The argument then turns on the infinite hazard which must result from following this example, in the instance of England, a State which can never be looked on as a safe dependent by France, and must therefore prepare for the most abject slavery, or the most decisive triumph. The councils of national dishonour find no echo in the lips of Burke. He presses on the empire the great truth, that the only fatal defeat of nations must be inflicted by their own hands. The loss of battles and provinces are but slight wounds, the loss of public spirit is the blow at the vitals. While the public spirit is sustained in its vigour, disaster often serves but the purpose of awaking the nation to its own resources, of rousing the full vigour of the people into indignant action, of strengthening the limbs and inspiring the heart; defeats may be but the blasts and frosts of public difficulty which brace the national frame, purify it of its diseased fulness, and invigorate the whole being to energies unfelt before, for duties to which it had been hitherto unequal. "While our heart is whole," says Burke, "it will find means, or make them. The heart of the citizen is a perennial spring of energy to the State. The public must never be regarded as incurable. * * * * For one, I despair of neither the public fortune, nor the public mind. Difficult as is our situation, there is a cou-

rageous wisdom; there is also a false, reptile prudence, the result not of caution, but of fear. Under misfortunes, it often happens, that the nerves of the understanding are so relaxed, the pressing peril of the hour so completely confounds all the faculties, that no future danger can be properly provided for, justly estimated, or so much as fully seen. The eye of the mind is dazzled and vanquished. An abject distrust of ourselves, extravagant admiration of the enemy, present us with no hope but in a compromise with his pride by a submission to his will. We plunge into a dark gulf with the rash precipitation of fear."

He makes a profound remark, on the principle of timidity:—"The nature of courage is, to be conversant with danger; but in the palpable night of their terrors, men under consternation suppose, not that it is the danger which calls out the courage to resist it, but that it is the courage which produces the danger. They therefore seek for a refuge from their fears in the fears themselves, and consider a temporizing meanness as the only source of safety."

This is followed by a succession of those pregnant maxims which a Statesman, and, above all, an English Statesman, should assume as principles. "In small, truckling States, a timely compromise with power has often been the means of drawling out their puny existence. But a great State is too much envied, too much dreaded, to find safety in humiliation.

"If wealth is the obedient and laborious slave of vir-

tue and public honour, then wealth is in its place. But if honour is to be sacrificed to the conservation of riches; riches, which have neither eyes nor hands, nor any thing truly vital in them, cannot long survive the being of the vivifying powers, their legitimate masters, and their potent protectors. If we command our wealth, we shall be rich and free; if our wealth command us, we shall be poor indeed. We are bought by the enemy with the treasure from our own coffers."

"Nature is false, or this is true, that the State which is resolved to hazard its existence, rather than abandon its objects, *must* have an infinite advantage over that which is resolved to yield rather than carry its resistance beyond a certain point: that the nation, which bounds its efforts only with its being, *must* give the law to that nation which will not push the opposition beyond its convenience.

"The great resource of Europe was in England, not in a sort of England detached from the rest of the world, but in that sort of England which considered herself as embodied with Europe; in that sort of England which, sympathetic with the adversity or the happiness of mankind, felt that nothing in human affairs was foreign to her."

When we consider the period at which the following observation was written; that England was then merely an assistant of foreign powers in the war; and that her maritime position seemed to preclude her from being any thing more; it argues an extraordinary pe-

netration, to have pronounced, as " a sure axiom, that no confederacy of the least effect or duration can exist against France, of which England is, not only a part, but the *head*." This observation, too, shews the high importance which may belong to the councils of an individual mind. If the principle here laid down had been acted on at the beginning of the war, Europe would have been saved a thousand millions of money, and ten times the value of those millions in lives. The war would have been finished in the first campaign. But England fought only as an auxiliary. Thus involved in every disaster of her allies, without the means of repelling it, or the hope of remedy, she suffered alike for their cowardice and their corruption, the blindness of their projects, and the obliquities of their policy. With but twenty thousand soldiers on the Continent, her name was continually tarnished by the retreats of this handful of brave men before the countless multitudes of the enemy, or her feelings were wrung by their sacrifices in the purchase of profitless victory. By thus taking a secondary part, and suffering nations to be principals, who were destined by nature only for auxiliaries, England placed the cause of Europe in a false position, and finally expended more in retrieving the defeats of those principals, than would have achieved the most signal triumph at the beginning. But this unhappy policy was changed at last, and from the moment of the change, the proud course of British supremacy began. England, no longer compel-

led to divide her vigilance between her enemy, and her allies; her native honour no longer degraded, nor her vigour made impotent by lingering in the second line, while heartless and ignorant hostilities were weakly sustained in the front; her councils no longer clogged by the weight of foreign tardiness; the field, the force, and the tactic once her own; the triumph was instant, matchless, and final. From the hour when Burke's maxim became the maxim of England, her banner waved but over a field of glory. If we are ever again to have a war for continental security, this wisdom must be written in living letters on the English Cabinet; that England cannot be the auxiliary in a foreign war—that she must enter the field as a leader, or nothing—that she must not for a moment consider how peace is to be made, until she has shewn that she has the power to strike an irresistible blow—that she must depend on nothing but herself, and disdaining the slack courage, the penurious magnanimity, and the time-serving lukewarmness, which she has always found in Continental Cabinets, and which will *for ever characterize them*, until adversity shall purify or judgment extinguish their national corruptions; she must summon her whole power to the contest, throw herself into the field with that magnificent profusion and lavishing of strength which disdains to think of a reverse; and making no provision for surrender, commit herself to the contest with a resolve to conquer, or to be undone.

Another of the great maxims which he presses on the public mind with reiterated and resistless illustration, is,—never to think of peace until we have made the enemy sick of war; all such rash desire of peace being only an evidence to the enemy that we feel our cause sinking, a direct encouragement to his attack, a direct discouragement to our allies; and by a still more fatal consequence, an anticipated decay of the spirit of the country. This great political error Burke pronounces to have been the source of all the calamities of the war. "People imagined," is his language, "that it was in our power to make peace with this monster of a State, whenever *we* chose to forget the crimes that made it great, and the designs that rendered it formidable. People imagined that their *ceasing to resist*, was the way to be secure. This pale cast of thought sicklied over all their enterprises, and turned all their politics awry. They could not read, in the most unequivocal declarations of the enemy, that more safety was to be found in the most arduous war, than in the friendship of that kind of being. * * * * * * This great, prolific error, that peace was always in our power, has been the cause that rendered the Allies indifferent about the direction of the war, and persuaded them that they might always risk a choice, and even a change in its objects. They seldom improved any advantage; hoping that the enemy, affected by it, *would make a proffer of peace.* Hence it was, that all their early victories have been followed with the effects of

defeat. The discomfitures of the Republic of Assassins have uniformly called forth new exertions, which not only repaired old losses, but prepared new conquests. The losses of the Allies, on the contrary, no provision having been made for such an event, have been followed by desertion, by dismay, by disunion, by a dereliction of their policy, by a flight from their principles, by an admiration of the enemy, by mutual accusations, by a distrust, in every member of the alliance, of its fellow, of its cause, of its power, and of its courage."

But, in Burke's view, the severer hazard was still at home. The attempts to bring faction to justice had remarkably failed; an insane and guilty passion for popularity had vitiated the Trial by Jury; and Government seldom dragged a criminal into Court, but to see him led out of it in triumph. He animadverts upon this desperate symptom of national perversion with his most pungent abhorrence. "Public prosecutions are become little better than schools for treason; of no use, but to improve the dexterity of criminals in the mystery of evasion; or to shew with what complete impunity men may conspire against the commonwealth, and with what safety assassins may attempt its awful head. Every thing is secure, except what the laws have made sacred; every thing is tameness and languor, that is not fury and faction. Whilst the distempers of a relaxed fibre prognosticate and prepare all the morbid force of convulsion in the body of the

State, the steadiness of the physician is overcome by the very aspect of the disease—'*Mussabat tacito medicina timore.*' The doctor of the constitution shrinks from his own operation. He doubts and questions the salutary, though critical, terrors of the cautery and the knife. He takes a poor credit even from his defeat, and covers impotence under the mask of lenity. Is all this, because in our day the statutes of the kingdom are not engrossed in as firm a character as ever? No, the law is clear, but it is a dead letter;—dead and putrid, it is insufficient to save the State, but potent to infect and kill."

In allusion to the necessity of perseverance, if England were to hope for success, he loftily pronounces:—"None can aspire to act greatly, but those who are of force greatly to suffer. They who make their arrangements in the first run of misadventure, and in a temper of mind the common fruit of disappointment and dismay, put a seal on their calamities. So far as their power goes, they take a security against any favours which they might hope from the usual inconstancy of fortune."

In narrating a diplomatic attempt to save the Duc de Choiseul, and some other emigrants, who had been thrown on the French coast by shipwreck, he gives a contemptuous sketch of the Jacobin sovereigns—"In the spirit of benevolence we sent a gentleman to beseech the Directory of Regicides, to be not quite so prodigal as their Republic had been, of judicial mur-

der. We solicited them to spare the lives of some unhappy persons of the first distinction, whose safety, at other times, could not have been an object of solicitation. Not a hostile invasion, but the disasters of the sea, had thrown them upon a shore more barbarous and inhospitable than the inclement ocean under the most pitiless of its storms. Here was an opportunity to express a feeling for the miseries of war. What was the event? A strange, uncouth being, a theatrical figure of the opera, his head shaded with three-coloured plumes, his body fantastically habited, strutted from the back scenes, and after a short speech, in the mock-heroic falsetto of stupid tragedy, delivered the gentleman who came to make the representation into the custody of a guard, with directions not to lose sight of him for a moment; and then ordered him to be sent from Paris in two hours."

Among the paradoxes of politicians, one of the most favourite is, that there must be party in the State. But this is no more than the defence of corruption. Party would be essential, if it were essential to the British Constitution to give life to a body of men bound together by the single object of seizing on power; sacrificing all individual principle to the general purposes of ambition; and openly declaring all means, however false and dishonourable, to be justified by their use in carrying the party into power. From the period of maturing this system, every enemy of England has found a ready-made advocacy in the British Parliament

—every act of abomination, perpetrated by the foreign enemy, has found a panegyrist in the domestic.—Rebellions which even the rebels dared not pronounce legitimate, were instantly adopted by the whole force of Opposition; held at the font in their peevish infancy, and baptized into rights and privileges by *established* faction. The revolt of America was thus authenticated. The latent hostility of the French Court was next nurtured into open war. Those incalculable mischiefs were the direct result of sanctioning "party," and turning the Legislature into a tribunal, where every cause, good or evil, was licensed to have its advocate, and every advocate unblushingly to acknowledge that his motive was in his fee. But the Ministry must be pulled down! and Opposition placed in its seat, and for this, what sacrifice of principle and the empire could be too prodigal. While every face of the honest and honourable was saddened by the clouds which then seemed to darken the horizon of England for ever, party roved the land triumphing. British victory threw them into mourning—British bloodshed only refreshed their countenances; and, in the hour when the sun of England, to the apprehensive spirit of a people untrained to disaster, seemed plunging into final night; Party publicly rejoiced at the coming on of a darkness, in which the Minister and the Nation were to be bewildered together. This spirit of selfishness impregnated its whole history, down to the moment when the French Revolution again summoned the true patriotism

of England to a struggle for national existence. The first sound of foreign ruin penetrated into the tomb, where Party had been laid to fester during the season of national tranquillity. It instantly started up, bringing with it from the grave all its old grossness, less purged than soured by its dark repository. Every blast of crime and shame from France was a new breath in its nostrils.

Burke charges it among the chief errors of Government, that it suffered its ears to be filled by the clamours of faction; an evil, to which he traced the encouragement of the public enemies, the arrogance of French diplomacy, and the evident depression of the public mind. He then at once indignantly depicts the contemptuous attitude in which the upstart Directory receive our humiliation, and eloquently supplicates the government and the nation to rouse themselves to a sense of the necessity of principled and resolute resistance. "The Regicide Directory, on the day which, in their gipsy jargon, they call the 5th of Pluviose, in return for our advances, charge us with eluding our declarations under 'evasive formalities and frivolous pretexts.' They then proceed to tell us they will offer peace on 'conditions as moderate,' as what? as reason and equity require? No! as moderate 'as are suitable to their *national dignity!*' National dignity, I do admit, is, in all treatises, an important consideration. They have given us a useful hint on the subject. But dignity, hitherto, has belonged to the mode of

proceeding, not to the matter of a treaty. Never before has it been mentioned as the standard for rating the conditions of peace; no, never by the most violent of conquerors. Indemnification is capable of some estimate; dignity has no standard. It is impossible to guess what acquisitions pride and ambition may think requisite for *their dignity*." He then bursts into a torrent of the most varied and powerful reprobation. The passage has become celebrated for its eloquence, but its merit lies in its political wisdom, more than even in its mastery of language. It is the famous picture of a revolutionary levee. It begins with a few touches of scorn.

"The Regicides tell us 'that they will have no peace with their enemies until they have reduced them to a state which will put them under an *impossibility* of pursuing their wretched projects;' that is, in plain French and English, until they have accomplished our utter and irretrievable ruin. This is their *pacific language*. To this conciliatory and amicable public communication, our sole answer in effect is this—'Citizen regicides! whenever *you* find yourselves in the humour, you may have peace with *us*. That is a point which you may always command. We are constantly in attendance; and nothing that you can do shall hinder us from the renewal of our supplications." He then lightens full upon the subject, and gives the whole fierce grouping with matchless reality. "To those who do not love to contemplate the fall of human great-

ness, I know not a more mortifying spectacle, than to see the assembled majesty of the crowned heads of Europe waiting, as patient suitors, in the antechamber of Regicide. They wait, it seems, until the sanguinary tyrant Carnot shall have *snorted away the undigested fumes of the blood of his sovereign. Then, when, sunk on the down of usurped pomp, he shall have sufficiently indulged his meditations with what monarch he shall next glut his ravening maw*, he may condescend to *signify that it is his pleasure to be awake ;* and that he is at leisure to receive the proposals of his high and mighty clients for the terms on which he may respite the execution of the sentence which he has passed upon them. At the opening of those doors, what a sight it must be to behold the plenipotentiaries of royal impotence, in the precedency which they will intrigue to obtain, and which will be granted to them according to the seniority of their degradation, sneaking into the regicide presence, and, with the relics of the smile which they had dressed up for the levee of their masters, still flickering on their curled lips; presenting the faded remains of their courtly graces, to meet the scornful, ferocious, sardonic grin of a bloody ruffian, who, while he is receiving their homage, *is measuring them with his eye, and fitting to their size the slider of his guillotine!* Those ambassadors may easily return as good courtiers as they went. But can they ever return from that degrading residence loyal and faithful subjects, or with any true affection to their master, or true attach-

ment to the constitution, religion, or laws of their country? There is great danger that they who enter smiling into this Trophonian cave, will come out of it sad and serious conspirators, and such will continue as long as they live. They will become conductors of contagion to every country which has the misfortune to send them forth. At best, they will become totally indifferent to good and evil, to one institution or another."

In his examination of the principles on which the nation must be called to support the war, he touches on the difficulties which should influence the British Minister to have recourse only to the manlier feelings of the empire. "There has not been in this century any foreign peace or war, in its origin the fruit of popular desire, except the war that was made with Spain in 1739. Sir Robert Walpole was forced into the war by the people, who were inflamed to this measure by the most leading politicians, by the first orators, and the greatest poets of the time. For that war Pope sang his dying notes; for that war, Johnson, in more energetic strains, employed the voice of his early genius; for that war Glover distinguished himself in the way in which his genius was the most natural and happy. The crowd readily followed the politicians in the cry for a war which threatened little bloodshed, and which promised victories attended with something more solid than glory. A war with Spain was a war of plunder. In the present conflict with Regicide, Mr Pitt

has not had, nor will perhaps have, many prizes to hold out in the lottery of war, to attempt the lower part of our character. He can maintain it only by an appeal to the higher; and to those in whom that higher part is the most predominant, he must look the most for its support. * * * * The weaker he is in the fund of motives which apply to our avarice, to our laziness, and to our lassitude, if he means to carry the war to any end at all, the stronger he ought to be in his addresses to our magnanimity and to our reason."

As the constitution is marked for overthrow, it has become the habit of party to libel the principles and services of William III. Burke amply vindicates his memory in a sketch of the war which rescued Europe from the grasp of France at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

" At the period of that war, our principal strength was found in the resolution of the people, and that in the resolution of a part only of the whole, which bore no proportion to our existing magnitude. England and Scotland were not united at the beginning of that mighty struggle. When, in the course of the contest, they were united, it was a raw, ill-connected, and unproductive union. Ireland was then the heaviest of burdens. An army of not much less than forty thousand men was drawn from the general effort, to keep that kingdom in a poor, unfruitful, and resourceless subjection. Such was the state of the empire.

"The state of the finances was worse, if possible. Every branch of the revenue became less productive after the Revolution. Silver, as the body of the current coin, was reduced so low, as not to have above three parts in four of the value of the shilling. In the greater part the value hardly amounted to the fourth. It required a dead expense of three millions sterling to renew the coinage. Public credit was cradled in bankruptcy. At this day we have seen parties contending to be admitted, at a moderate premium, to advance eighteen millions to the Exchequer. For infinitely smaller loans, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of that day, Montague, the father of public credit, counter-securing the State by the appearance of the City, with the Lord Mayor of London at his side, was obliged, like a solicitor for an hospital, to go, cap in hand, from shop to shop, to borrow a hundred pounds, and even smaller sums. When made up in driblets as they could, their best securities were at an interest of twelve per cent. The paper of the Bank was often at a discount of twenty. * * * As to private credit, there were not, as I believe, twelve banker's shops at that time out of London. In 1697, in that state of things, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom we have just seen begging from door to door, came forward to move a resolution full of vigour, in which, far from being discouraged by the generally adverse fortune and the long continuance of the war, the Commons agreed to address the Crown, in the following manly, spirited,

and truly animated style :—' This is the Eighth year in which your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons, in Parliament assembled, have assisted your Majesty with large supplies for carrying on a just and necessary war, in defence of our religion, and the preservation of our laws, and vindication of the rights and liberties of England.' Afterwards they proceed in this manner,—' To show to your Majesty and all Christendom, that the Commons of England will not be *amused*, or diverted from their firm resolution of obtaining by *war*, a safe and honourable peace; We do, in the name of those we represent, renew our assurances to support your Majesty and your Government against all your enemies, both at home and abroad, and that we will effectually assist you in carrying on the war against France." The *amusement* and diversion they speak of was the suggestion of a treaty *prepared* by the enemy and announced from the throne. No sighing and panting after negociation ; no motions from Opposition to force the Ministry into a peace; no messages from Ministers to palsy and deaden the resolution of Parliament, or the spirit of the nation. They did not so much as advise the King to listen to the propositions of the enemy, nor to seek for peace, but through the mediation of a vigorous war. This address was moved in a hot, a divided, a factious, and, in a great part, disaffected House of Commons ; and it was carried, *nemine contradicente*."

This strong determination of the country, coercing

the House of Commons into the adoption of the firm councils which afterwards saved Europe, had been almost a providential preparative for the crisis which followed.—" When the first war, (which was ill smothered by the treaty of Ryswic,) slept in the thin ashes of a seeming peace, a new conflagration was in its immediate causes. A fresh and a far greater war was in preparation. * * * * * The steps which were taken at that time, to compose, to reconcile, to unite, and to discipline all Europe against the growth of France, certainly furnish to a statesman the finest and most interesting part in the history of that great period. It formed the master-piece of King William's policy, dexterity, and perseverance."

He then comes to the direct character of that policy which had been the seed of such splendid triumph, and which he prescribes as essential to the British Government *in all instances* of French war. " Full of the idea of preserving not only a local civil liberty to our country, but to embody it in the political liberty, the order and independence of nations united under a natural head, the King called on his parliament to put itself into a posture—' to preserve to England the weight and influence it at present had on the councils and affairs abroad. *It will be requisite thot Europe should see you will not be wanting to yourselves.*' "

Who can look upon the following passage without regretting that Burke did not feel it among his duties

to give the world the history of the Revolution of 1688? "Baffled as the King was," says Burke, "and almost heartbroken at the disappointments he met with in the mode which he first proposed for that great end, he held on his course. He was faithful to his object; and in councils, as in arms, over and over again repulsed, over and over again he returned to the charge. All the mortifications which he had suffered from the last Parliament, and the greater which he had to apprehend from that newly chosen, were not capable of relaxing the vigour of his mind. He was in Holland when he combined the vast plan of his foreign negotiations. When he came to open his designs to his Ministers in England, even the sober firmness of Somers, the undaunted resolution of Shrewsbury, and the adventurous spirit of Montague and Orford were staggered. *They were not yet mounted to the elevation of the King.* The Cabinet, then the Regency, met on the subject at Tunbridge Wells, the 28th of August 1698; and there, Lord Somers holding the pen, after expressing doubts on the state of the Continent, which they ultimately refer to the King, as best informed, they gave him a most discouraging portrait of the spirit of the nation. 'So far as relates to England,' say the Ministers, 'it would be want of duty not to give your Majesty this clear account, that there is a deadness and want of spirit in the nation universally, so as to be not at all disposed to entering into a new war. This is the truth of the fact, on which your Majesty

will determine what resolution is to be taken.' His Majesty did determine, and did take and pursue his resolution. In all the tottering imbecility of a new government, and with Parliament totally unmanageable, he persevered. He persevered, to expel the fears of his people by his fortitude—to steady their fickleness by his constancy—to expand their narrow prudence by his enlarged wisdom—to sink their factious temper in his public spirit. In spite of the people, he resolved to make them great and glorious—to make England, however inclined to shrink into her narrow self, the tutelary angel of the human race."

## CHAPTER IX.

Burke's Maxims of British Policy—Existing Jacobinism—Divorce in Paris—British Charity—Corps of Condé—Foresight of Victory—Last illness of Burke—Criticism by Mackintosh—Burke's Death-bed—His religious resignation—His Will.

It is remarkable as a historical lesson, if it were not still more remarkable as a political warning, that Burke uniformly laid it down as a principle of our foreign relations, that we should watch France with perpetual vigilance, and protect Holland with the most confiding amity. On this policy he grounds the safety alike of England and of Europe; and for its soundness he quotes the example of the greatest names of English statesmanship, in the period of the most trying struggle ever sustained by the empire. Holding up William to the admiration of posterity for his persevering wisdom and unshaken courage in pursuing this high policy, he forcibly declares, that, "in spite of the ministers, *who staggered under the weight that his mind im-*

*posed upon theirs*, he infused into them his own soul, he renewed in them their ancient heart, he rallied them in the ancient cause." To accomplish this result had been attended with formidable difficulties. The public mind, oppressed with the sense of frequent failure, and the public purse, exhausted with the expenditure of a long war, both required to be reinstated. But if the utility of a kingly government could ever be disputed in England, it was decided by the services of William. His knowledge of foreign politics, his keen insight into the ambition of France, his powerful foresight of the consequences to the liberties of all nations; and even his sudden and singular possession of the secrets of national prosperity in a country so new to him as England; constituted the King not merely the first man in rank, but the first in *council;* not merely the chief of the Government, but the Government. On the head of that individual might have rested the whole question, whether within those twenty years, Europe was to be more than an immense dungeon, and France less than the holder of the chain.

The national understanding was first appealed to, and the people were gained. Thus their representatives were rendered more capable of adopting the wisdom of the royal councils. William was equally active abroad. The fortunate, or rather the providential circumstance of his being a native of Holland, gave him irresistible influence in a country, where the

slightest defection would have hazarded the fate of Europe.

" Under the influence of William, Holland had rejected the allurements of every seduction, and had resisted the terrors of every menace. With Hannibal at her gates, she had nobly and magnanimously refused all separate treaty, or any thing which might for a moment appear to divide her affection or her interest, or even to distinguish her identity from England. Having settled the great point of the consolidation (which he hoped would be eternal) of countries made for a common interest, and common sentiment, the King, in his message to both Houses, calls their attention to the affairs of the States-General. The House of Lords was perfectly sound, and impressed with the wisdom and dignity of the King's proceedings. In answer to the message, which was narrowed to a single point, the danger of the States-General, the Lords opened themselves at large. They go far beyond the demands of the message. They express themselves as follows: —" We take this occasion further to assure your Majesty, that we are sensible of the great and imminent danger to which the States-General are exposed. And we perfectly agree with them in believing that their safety and ours are so inseparably united, that whatsoever is ruin to the one, must be fatal to the other. We humbly desire your Majesty will be pleased not only to make good all the articles of any former treaties to the States-General, but that you will enter into a strict league, offensive and defensive,

with them, for their common preservation; and that you will invite into it all princes and states who are concerned in the present visible danger, arising from the union of France and Spain."

The answer concluded with the noble, and pious words—" Not doubting but, whenever your Majesty shall be obliged to be engaged for the defence of your allies, and *securing the liberty and quiet of Europe*, Almighty God will protect your sacred person in so righteous a cause; and that the unanimity, wealth, and courage of your subjects, will carry your Majesty with honour and success through all *the difficulties of a just war*."

The Commons more tardily, but with equal effect, seconded the royal determination, and " went so far as to fix the three great maxims of the safety of England, as they were then, and *must be, to the end of time.* They asserted, in general terms, the Necessity of supporting Holland—of Keeping united with our allies—and of Maintaining the liberty of Europe. * * * " Under the British union, the union of Europe was consolidated, and it long held together with a degree of cohesion, firmness, and fidelity, not known before or since, in any political combination of that extent. Just as the last hand was given to this immense and complicated machine, the master-workman died. But the work was formed on true mechanical principles, and it was as truly wrought. It went by the impulse it had received from its first mover. The man was dead, but the Grand Alliance survived, in which William

*lived and reigned.* That heartless and dispirited people, whom Lord Somers had represented, but two years before, as dead in energy and operation, continued this war, to which it was supposed that they were unequal in mind and in means, *for nearly thirteen years!*"

From this grave statement, Burke, like an orator, filled with a proud sense of the merit of his cause, breaks out into a superb amplification.

" For what have I entered into all this detail? To what purpose have I recalled your view to the end of the last century? It has been done to shew that the British nation was then a great people; to point out by what means they came to be exalted above the vulgar level, and to take that lead which they assumed among mankind. To qualify us for that pre-eminence, we had then a high mind, and a constancy unconquerable; we were then inspired with no flashy passions, but such as were durable, as well as warm; such as corresponded to the great interest which we had at stake. *This force of character was inspired, as all such spirit must ever be, from above.* Government gave the impulse. As well may we fancy, that of itself, the sea will swell, and that without winds the billows will insult the adverse shore, as that the gross mass of the people will be moved, and elevated, and continue by a steady and permanent direction to bear upon any one point, without the influence of superior authority, or superior mind."

He now rushes on through his subject, dispensing grand axioms of government, and as he glows with the rapidity of his course, pouring out passages of the richest eloquence, fiery sparkles from his chariot wheels. Thus, of the war, he pronounces, "That it was made, if ever war was made, to touch all the great springs of action in the human breast. It ought not to have been a war of apology. The Minister had, in this conflict, wherewithal to glory in success; to be consoled in adversity; to hold high his principle in all fortunes. If it were not given to him to support the falling edifice, he ought to bury himself under the ruins of the civilized world. All the arts of Greece, and all the pride and power of Eastern monarchs, never heaped upon their ashes so grand a monument." He then turns with fine rebuke upon individuals who had talked frivolously of "trying war for a year or two, and then voting for peace. * * * * As if war were a matter of experiment! As if you could take it up or lay it down as an idle frolic! As if the dire goddess that presides over it, with her murderous spear in her hand, and her gorgon at her breast, were a coquette to be flirted with! We ought, with reverence, to approach that tremendous Divinity, which loves courage, but commands counsel. War never leaves, where it found a nation! * * * * Peace may be made as unadvisedly as war. *Nothing is so rash as fear.* The councils of Pusillanimity rarely put off, what they are sure to aggravate, the evils from which they would fly."

He then loftily and wisely deprecates the attempts of the feebler adherents of the Ministry to make the war popular, by reference to commercial advantages. "Never can a vehement and sustained spirit of fortitude be kindled in a people by a *war of calculation.* It has nothing that can keep the mind erect under the gusts of adversity. Even where men are willing, as sometimes they are, to barter their blood for lucre, to hazard their safety for the gratification of their avarice; the passion which animates them to that sort of conflict, *like all the other short-sighted passions,* must see its objects distinct and at hand. Speculative plunder; contingent spoil; future, long adjourned, contingent booty; pillage, which must enrich a late posterity, and which possibly may not reach posterity at all; those, for any length of time, will not support a mercenary war. The people are in the right. *The calculation of profit in all such wars is false.* On balancing the account of such wars, ten thousand hogsheads of sugar are purchased at ten thousand times their price. The blood of man should never be shed, but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our family, for our friends, for our God, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity, the rest is crime."

The French republic has passed away; but its history is not obsolete while its principles exist. It is at this hour the model of government, if the confusion and disruption of all order can deserve the name, to the whole vast, disturbing faction of Europe. Jaco-

binism has been crushed for the time, but its malice evades the power of human institutions. The body may have been gibbeted, but even on the scaffold it only diffuses the wider contagion. Burke's memorial of that terrible crisis is but a fragment, yet it displays with wonderful force the fearful character of the Evil. The whole length is still in the rock, yet the visage is brought out with the impetuous stroke of a Michael Angelo.

"France has constructed her Republic on *three* bases, all fundamentally opposite to those on which the communities of Europe are built. Its foundation is laid in Regicide, in Jacobinism, and in Atheism. * * * I call a commonwealth regicide, which lays it down as a fixed law of nature, and a fundamental right of man, that all government, not being a democracy, is a usurpation; that all kings, as such, are usurpers; and, for being kings, may and ought to be put to death, with their wives, families, and adherents. The commonwealth which acts uniformly upon those principles, and which, after abolishing every festival of religion, chooses the most flagrant act of a murderous regicide treason for a feast of eternal commemoration, and which forces all her people to observe it, this I call *Regicide by Establishment.*

"Jacobinism is the revolt of the enterprising talents of a country against its property. When private men form themselves into associations for the purpose of destroying the laws and institutions of their

country; when they secure to themselves an army, by dividing among the people of no property the estates of the ancient and lawful proprietors; when a State recognises those acts; when it does not make confiscations for crimes, but crimes for confiscations; when it has its principal strength, and all its resources, in such a violation of property; when it stands chiefly upon such a violation, massacring by judgments, or otherwise, those who make any struggle for their old legal government, and their legal possessions; I call this *Jacobinism by Establishment.*

" I call it *Atheism by Establishment*, when any State, as such, shall not acknowledge the existence of God as the moral governor of the world; when it shall offer to him no religious or moral worship; when it shall abolish the Christian religion by a regular decree; when it shall persecute with a cold, unrelenting, steady cruelty, by every mode of confiscation, imprisonment, exile, and death, all its ministers; when it shall generally shut up, or pull down, churches; when the few buildings which remain of this kind, shall be opened only for the purpose of making a profane apotheosis of monsters, whose vices and crimes have no parallel among men, and whom all other men consider as objects of general detestation, and the severest animadversion of law; when, in the place of that religion of social benevolence, and individual self-denial, in mockery of all religion, they institute impious, blasphemous, indecent theatric rites, in honour

of their vitiated reason, and erect altars to the personification of their own corrupted and bloody republic; when schools and seminaries are founded at the public expense to poison mankind, from generation to generation, with the horrible maxims of this impiety; when, at length, wearied out with incessant martyrdom, and the cries of a people hungering and thirsting for religion, they permit it only as a tolerated evil; this I call Atheism by Establishment. When, to those establishments, we add the *Correspondent System of Manners*, no doubt can be left on the mind of a thinking man concerning their determined hostility to the human race."

From this blasting exposure of the principles of revolution, this stern and scientific dissection of its frame, he reverts to the aid furnished to its progress by the poison of national manners. His remarks on the influence of those powerful instruments of good and evil are true; but he too rapidly drops their history. "Manners," he observes, "are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe. They give their whole form and colour to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them. Of this the new French legislators were

aware. Therefore, with the same method, and under the same authority, they settled a system of manners, the most licentious, prostitute, and abandoned, that was ever known; and at the same time, the most coarse, rude, savage, and ferocious. Nothing in the Revolution, no not to a phrase or a question, not to the fashion of a hat or a shoe, was left to accident. * * * * * No mechanical means could be devised in favour of this incredible system of wickedness, that has not been employed. The noblest passions, the love of glory, the love of country, have been debauched into the means of its preservation and propagation. All sorts of shows and exhibitions, calculated to inflame and vitiate the imagination, and pervert the moral sense, have been contrived. They have sometimes brought forth five or six hundred drunken women, calling at the bar of the Assembly for *the blood of their children*, as being royalists or constitutionalists. Sometimes they have got a body of wretches, calling themselves fathers, to demand *the murder of their sons;* boasting that Rome had but one Brutus, but they could shew five hundred! There were instances in which they inverted and retaliated the impiety; and produced *sons who called for the execution of their parents!* The foundation of their republic is laid in moral paradoxes. *Their patriotism is always prodigy.* All the instances to be found in history, whether real or fabulous, of a doubtful public spirit, at which morality is perplexed, reason is staggered, and from

which affrighted nature recoils, are their chosen and almost sole examples for the instruction of their youth."

One striking evidence of the *intention* of the French reformers to subvert the whole system of morals, was exhibited in their approach to the total *degradation and extinction of marriage.* "Other legislators," says Burke, "knowing that marriage is the origin of all relations, and consequently the first element of all duties, have endeavoured, by every means, to make it *sacred.* The Christian religion, by *confining it to the pairs,* and by *rendering that union indissoluble,* has, by these two things, done more towards the peace, happiness, settlement, and civilization of the world, than by any other part in the whole scheme of Divine wisdom. The direct contrary course has been taken in the *Synagogue of Antichrist*—I mean in that forge and manufactory of all evil, the Sect which predominated in the Constituent Assembly of 1789. Those monsters employed the same, or greater, industry, to desecrate and degrade that state, which other legislators have used to render it holy and honourable. By a strange uncalled for declaration, they pronounced that marriage was no better than a common civil contract. It was one of their ordinary tricks, to put their sentiments into the mouths of certain personated characters, which they theatrically exhibited at the bar of what ought to be a serious assembly. * * * * The practice of divorce, though in some countries permit-

ted, has been discouraged in all. In the East, polygamy and divorce are in discredit, and the manners correct the laws. In Rome, while Rome was in its integrity, the few causes allowed for divorce amounted in effect to a prohibition. They were only three; the arbitrary was totally excluded; and accordingly, some hundreds of years passed, without a single example of that kind. When manners were corrupted, the laws were relaxed; as the latter always follow the former, when they are not able to vanquish them."

From this view of the principle, he gives the statement of the practical effect. It is perhaps one of the most extraordinary instances in the history of moral disorder. "I have before me the Paris paper, corresponding to the usual register of births, marriages, and deaths. Divorce, happily, is no regular head of registry among civilized nations. With the Jacobins, it is remarkable, that divorce is not only a regular head, but that it has the post of honour. It occupies the first place in the list. In the first three months of the year 1793, the number of divorces in that city amounted to 562! The marriages were 1785. So that the proportion of divorces to marriages was not much less than *one to three*; a thing unexampled, I believe, among mankind. I caused an enquiry to be made at Doctors' Commons, and found that *all the divorces* (which, except by special act of Parliament, are separations, and not proper divorces) did not amount,

in all those Courts, and in a *hundred years*, to much more than *one-fifth of those that passed in the single city of Paris in three months!*"

He then sums up the charge. "It appears as if the contract which renovates the world, were under no law at all. With the Jacobins of France, vague intercourse is without reproach; marriage is reduced to the vilest concubinage; children are encouraged to cut the throats of their parents; mothers are taught that tenderness is no part of their character, and that to demonstrate their attachment to their party, they ought to make no scruple to rake with their bloody hands in the bowels of those who came from their own."

In the nineteenth century, we have to thank Whiggism for giving us the Jacobin boon of the nineteenth. Marriage is now pronounced simply a *civil contract!* We must be grateful to faction, that it did not demand a licence for highway robbery. The blushes of Whiggism were spared on the occasion. But the time will come. But the annals of rabble sovereignty are to be written in still blacker characters. All that could combine impurity with outrage had been already exhibited. The next step was the combination of all that could revolt the senses, with all that could shock the feelings, the combination of disgust with horror. To this list, Burke, in shame for human nature, adds, the practice of *cannibalism*. "By cannibalism, their *devouring*, as a nutriment of their ferocity, some

part of *the bodies of those whom they murdered;* their *drinking the blood of their victims*, and forcing the victims themselves to *drink the blood of their kindred, slaughtered before their faces.*"

The general result of these horrid mixtures of ferocity and festivity; this sanguinary revel on things which nature abhors; this poisoning of every natural appetite, to poison every natural sensibility; this demon feast of wild scoffing, mad sport, and godless abomination, was the total overthrow of the public mind. If ever a whole nation was bedlamite, France was that nation. The whole, and the sole, business of the people was bloodshed. The mob of Paris were not to be beguiled of an hour's *ennui*, but by sights that make the frame of man shudder, and his eyes abhor the light of day. The scaffold was the great festival, the national entertainment, to attend which the population rose from their beds, and to dream of whose novel atrocities on the morrow, the nation laid their heads on a contented pillow. Murder made the unrivalled exhilaration of French existence. This, too, was part and parcel of the Jacobin receipt for proselytism. It was no accidental burst of ambitious vice, no sudden and unruly divergence from the rough road by which the Jacobin principles were to travel to supremacy, no chance blaze of the explosive materials which the policy of rebellion would have used gradually, and modified into regularity of ruin. The system was—to turn all into explosion; to inflame every furious pro-

pensity of the degenerate heart of man into its fullest fever; to scorn consequences, however instant and appalling; and think only of means, however costly and pregnant with public misfortune; to make the axe the virtual instrument of all change, and make all change for the purpose of all evil,—a general and irretrievable overthrow of society from its foundations.

Those things will not be believed by posterity but on such high evidence as is furnished by the pages of Burke. And those pages thus become important to the last hours of mankind, as the record of the vehement plagues which may be stored up in the human passions. For this great use they will be immortal, and be worth their immortality; whatever change of language, whatever decay of taste, whatever barbarism of the national mind, impressed by poverty, revolt, or chains; whatever bitter business of national life; may absorb, or paralyze, all sense of their philosophical thought, of the captivation of the noblest oratory, or of the manliest knowledge and direction of the motives of man. And thus Burke's intellectual honours may moulder away, yet still his *facts* be in existence for the wisdom of the future.—The catacomb and the corpse will be there, when the gilded and sculptured temple that once stood above them is swept away in the tempest, or covered with the weed and the sand.

To render the people *profligate*, and, for this pur-

pose, to keep them perpetually hurrying from one display of profligacy to another; to make France drunk with licentiousness; was a settled rule of the Jacobin government. "While courts of justice were thrust out by revolutionary tribunals, and silent churches were only the funeral monuments of departed religion, there were no fewer than nineteen or twenty *(twenty-eight)* theatres, great and small, most of them kept open at the public expense, and all of them crowded every night. Among the gaunt, haggard forms of famine and nakedness, amidst the yells of murder, the tears of affliction, and the cries of despair, the song, the dance, the mimic scene, the buffoon laughter, went on as regularly as in the gay hour of festive peace. I have it from good authority, that *under the scaffold* of judicial murder, and *the gaping planks that poured down blood on the spectators, the space was hired out for a show of dancing dogs!* * * * * The habits of Paris had no resemblance to the finished virtues, or to the polished vice, and elegant, though not blameless, luxury of the capital of a great empire. Their society was more like that of a den of outlaws upon a doubtful frontier; of a lewd tavern for the revels and debauches of banditti, assassins, bravoes, smugglers, and their more desperate paramours, mixed with bombastic players, the refuse and rejected offal of strolling theatres, puffing out ill-sorted verses about virtue, mixed with the licentious and blasphemous songs proper to their brutal and hardened course of life."

Repelling as is this picture of depravity, Burke might have gone further still, and heightened the picture by the contrast of the depravity with its object. It was to build thrones for a succession of obscure and miserable villains, that all human order was to be thus cast into confusion. The purpose was not founded, nor capable of being founded, in any of those dazzling generalities which daring and excitable minds have so often mistaken for virtue. It was not for the glory of their country, for the establishment of renovated law, for the clearance of the national soil from the old encumbrances of feudalism. All this had been done by the first wave of the national hand. All that could have obstructed the path of France to the temple of guiltless freedom, had vanished, like an apparition, at a word. But it was only when the work of reform was done, that the work of overthrow began; it was only when the King had taken the lead in breaking the few relaxed and time-worn fetters of France, that they discovered his criminality; it was only when the constitution was complete, that the revolutionary torch was kindled, and the populace was hurried on, bewildered by its blaze, in a riotous bacchanalian revel of vice and fury, to fire the palace in which their constitution had been but just proclaimed and consecrated.

The Revolution, from that hour, was totally selfish and sensual. The Dantons, Heberts, Marats, and Robespierres, were totally incapable of the commonest degree of self-denial that belongs to the common-

est patriotism; their object was personal power, as the price of personal luxury; and the instrument with which they squeezed the purse of the nation, was the guillotine. The sincerity of their villany would have scoffed at the supposition that the good of their country was the prize for which they swam through such an ocean of blood. It was solely, that they might revel in the full feast of the senses, wallow in the wealth of rapine, and dissolve in the grossest corruptions of the grossest voluptuary, that those crimsoned epicures drained the arteries of France. The hideous licentiousness of their private hours is not to be disclosed, without doing more offence to morals than its disclosure could do homage to justice. But, if the memory of its details be best consigned to the tomb, with the remnants of the regicides themselves; the character of their lives is still worth being remembered as a moral. There let nations see in the portraits of those arrogant, selfish, and bloody seekers after iniquitous possession, the true countenances of those flatterers of popular vanity who make a trade of public virtue. Let them not less mark in the furies of their career, in their contempt of public feelings, in their crush of public rights, in their wild, lavish, and implacable love of the sights and sounds of public misery; the natural consummation of a character which begins by political hypocrisy. Let them there learn to tear the mask from the Jacobin chicane, which is hourly found flinging itself on its knees in the mire before the populace, which stoops to the infinite mean-

ness of praising the ignorant for their knowledge, the headlong for their judgment, the foolish for their wisdom, the mean for their elevation, and the prostitute for their virtue. To this extent even the example of the French regicides is convertible into use. It gives us the natural consummation of the candidate for popular supremacy. If the restraints of our land are still too strong for the full embodying of his profligate ambition, it shews us the shape which that ambition tends to assume. It may operate as a summons to lazy security, to trample on the dragon's eggs; when we see the breadth of wing, and venom of fang, to which they may be incubated. In this feeling we may endure even to uncover the grave of the atheist and the murderer, and comparing the matured horrors of the physiognomy of revolution, with the features of pretended patriotism—the regicide with the demagogue; guard ourselves against the measureless folly of being deluded by professions, and seduced into the absurdity of believing that the political liar, the sycophant of the mob, whom he hates, the craver for that authority which he affects to scorn, the influencer of every ignorant impulse of rabble passion, the hypocrite in all things, but his contempt of religion, can require any thing but power, to give the evil of his miscreant nature full play, and sacrifice the peace of an empire to the lust of possession.

To the rebel plea that, whatever might be the ebullitions of French freedom, England ought to have re-

garded the republic as a legitimate authority; Burke replies with overwhelming truth,—that Republican France was not France; that it wanted all the old true constituent principles of a country once regarded as capable of entering into the social system; that France was eviscerated of all the nobler organs which once gave it a European existence, and was filled in their place with nothing but brute qualities, perverted powers, and instincts of evil. The argument was indisputable. With all its good extinguished, and all its evil infuriated, France was no more France, than a human being transformed into a tiger would be worthy to retain the name of man. The change in nature justifies, and commands a change in all the external relations of society. France sailing in the common fleet of nations, whether freighted with the commodities of peace, or armed with the furniture and munitions of war, was a noble vessel, entitled to the full benefit of the laws of peace or war. But what jurist, in all the extravagance of liberality, would extend those laws to the fire-ship.—France turned into the conveyancer of death, her whole freightage pregnant with ruin, and amassed, laid, and primed, for the express purpose of ruin; a floating pile of incendiarism, lying at single anchor, to be let loose on all within reach, and whose slightest touch was conflagration? Burke states the case on the broadest principles. "It is a question not between France and England. It is a question between *property and force. The property*

*of the nation is the nation!* They who massacre, plunder, and expel the body of the proprietory, are *murderers and robbers.*" This bold assertion of the principle on which the whole existence of civilized nations depends, was the true answer to the sycophancy that then, and now, adulates the " Sovereign Majesty of the populace."

On the large scale of public concerns, which constitutes the object and the grounds of all rational government; property can be the only quality under which the *nation* can be contemplated. Property in the subject is the only security *to the State*, for either the ability, the knowledge, or the subordination, of the subject. Mere personal integrity, important as it is to the individual, is essentially too personal and indistinguishable, to form an object to the statesman's eye, which must take in the whole horizon of national character. Mere intellectual superiority must be rare: thus though no man will justly compare wealth with the personal possession of moral excellence, learning, or genius; yet those incomparable qualities are, by their nature, unfit to classify mankind. But, *in a general sense*, the acquisition of wealth implies them all. It may be the fruit of crime, or the gift of chance, in a single case; but, in any *large mass of mankind*, the acquisition of wealth is necessarily connected with the exertion of industry, intelligence, and integrity. As the possession of wealth thus generally implies obedience to the laws, an indisposition to public hazards, and, if not a

zeal of loyalty, a reluctance to traffic in rebellion, it constitutes what, to the legislator, is the very highest qualification in all that *he* manipulates,—a moral security against the ruinous appetite for political change. Thus it is that *property* becomes the natural, social representative of all which forms the national capability of enjoying the benefits, and retaining the solid shape, of a regular community. Thus it is too, that democracy, which always depreciates the power of property, is essentially in the *wrong*. Thus it is, that affecting to make obscure talent, humble integrity, and disinterested love of the public good, its idols; democracy actually degrades them from their true rank, and, by extinguishing the property which has been ordained by nature to be the true nurse, the active introducer, the vivid stimulant, and the general pledge of them all, prostrates the whole moral and intellectual ability of the nation before brute force. Democracy establishes,—that the fact of being born gives a claim to political power; that having two legs and two arms is a sufficient plea for the seizure of the State; and in all instances, that where force can prevail, its triumph is legitimate. Overleaping at once the whole system of gradual approach to that height, on which man requires so long and mature a training to stand without turning the brain; breaking down all the gates and barriers at which, by the old and wise regulations of public experience, the aspirants for public distinctions must give account of themselves; it only turns ignorance into presumption,

and power into tyranny. This was its career in France, and this will be its career in every land where the democratic principle is predominant. Yet a distinction must be drawn between a republic and a democracy. The republic *may* have all the institutions of a monarchy. The American government is as nearly monarchical at this hour as the British, in all but the name. The President is a King for five years; the King a President for life; and neither of them can act but by ministers. But the hazard which menaces this, and all republics is, that they vitiate into democracies. Their acknowledged deference for the mere multitude, the gross error of suffering *numbers* to be an element of legislation, and the perpetual necessity imposed on the members of the legislature to flatter the passions, exaggerate the importance, and solicit the caprices, of the populace, naturally deliver them, bound hand and foot, to the tyranny of the rabble.

The simple American principle of election—one representative for every forty thousand human beings, must, at no distant time, render the mere population masters of the government, propagate a race of demagogues, and render popular delusion the only quality of the representative, as physical force is the only requisite of the represented. The result must finally be either the total abolition of the due influence of property in the state, or a civil war of property against rapine. The only security for a settled government, or national progress, must lie in the direct contrary—in declar-

ing political privileges, as in England, to be not a *natural right*, but a conventional reward—in holding forth the power of voting, not as the result of being born, (in which merit or demerit can have no place,) but as the result of superior intelligence, industry, and character; or, as the chief public indication and fruit of them all,—the possession of *property*. Thus had England, in her days of wisdom, established her constitution. The right of voting for the member of Parliament was given to the workman who had served his apprenticeship with credit; to the man who had earned, by long residence and character, the freedom of the borough; to the son of the freeman; to the man by whom it had been purchased by his money, by the respect of his townsmen, by his office, or by eminent public services. In nearly all instances, it was in the declared shape of an *equivalent* for some real or conceived merit, which marked the individual from the mass of the community. The practice, of course, sometimes deviated. But the principle was fixed; and, until it was abolished by the Reform Act, which retaining a nominal qualification of property, actually made *numbers* the arbiter of the House of Commons; it was the great maxim, by which English liberty was raised to the most unexampled elevation, without the disturbance of English tranquillity.

"The French democracy," Burke insists, with still increasing force of logic, and boldness of illustration, was not to be disguised under the pacific and common-

place name of a victory of party over party. "It was a destruction and decomposition of the whole society, which never can be made *of right*, by any faction, however powerful, nor without terrible consequences to all about it, in both the act and the example. Mere locality does not constitute a body politic. Had Cade and his gang got possession of London, they would not have been the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council. The body politic of France existed in the majesty of its throne, in the dignity of its nobility, in the honour of its gentry, in the sanctity of its clergy, in the reverence of its magistracy, in the weight due to its landed property in the several bailliages, in the respect due to its movable substance represented by the corporations of the kingdom. All those particular *moleculæ* united, form the great mass of what is truly *the body politic* in all countries. *Nation* is a moral essence, not a geographical arrangement. France, though out of her territorial possessions, exists; because the sole possible claimant, the proprietory, and the government to which the proprietory adheres, exists. The regicides in France are not France. France is out of her bounds, but the kingdom is the same."

But he renders the reasoning at once clearer and more impressive, by bringing the subject to our own shores. He supposes the fury of revolution to have been let loose in England instead of France; George the Third to have been the sacrifice instead of Louis

the Sixteenth; our Royal Family destroyed; the great body of the clergy massacred, or robbed of all, and transported; and then asks, and with irresistible force, would any man in his senses pronounce their murderers and robbers to constitute the English nation?

"Let us suppose," he exclaims, in language alike pathetic and powerful, "that the Christian religion, in all its denominations, were forbidden and persecuted —the Law totally, and in all its parts, destroyed—the Judges put to death by revolutionary tribunals—the Peers and Commons robbed, to the last acre of their estates, massacred if they staid, or obliged to seek life in flight, exile, or beggary—that the whole landed property should share the same fate—that every military and naval officer of rank, almost to a man, should be placed in the same description of confiscation and exile—that the principal merchants and bankers should be drawn out, as from a hen-coop, for slaughter—that the citizens of our greatest and most flourishing cities, where the hand and the machinery of the hangman were not found sufficient, should have been collected in the public squares, and massacred, by thousands, with cannon—if three hundred thousand others should have been doomed to a situation worse than death, in noisome and pestilential prisons,—in such a case, is it in the *faction of robbers that I am to look for my country?* Would this be the England that I, and even strangers, admired, honoured, loved, and cherished?

Would not the exiles of England alone be my government and my fellow-citizens? Would not their places of refuge be my temporary country? Would not all my duties and all my affections be there, and there only? Should I consider myself as a traitor, and deserving of death, if I knocked at the door and heart of every potentate in Christendom, to succour my friends, and to avenge them on their enemies? Could I, in any way, shew myself more a patriot? What should I think of those potentates who insulted our suffering brethren; who treated them as vagrants; and could find no allies, no friends, but in regicide murderers and robbers? What ought I to think and feel, if, being geographers instead of kings, they recognised the desolated cities, the wasted fields, the rivers polluted with blood, as the honourable member of Europe called England?"

The condition of the emigrant noblesse and clergy of France had already excited strong commiseration in England; in some degree through Burke's personal zeal, and the high influence which his character enabled him to exertupon the opulent and noble classes. It was to the honour of this country, and it may have been no slight element in her preservation, that her charity to those unhappy people was boundless. Public subscription, private benevolence, and the protection of Government, were instantly and incessantly extended to the whole multitude; who, though strangers in language, alien in faith, and almost irre-

concilable in manners to the English mind, were recognised by the nation as sufferers in the cause of loyalty and honour. Fortunate for those who took refuge under the wing of Britain.

But the state of the emigrants in the continental kingdoms was of a different order. Those kingdoms, from their very constitution as absolute monarchies, were incapable of rendering the broad, fearless, and uncalculating generosity of the British empire. Despotisms may be wise, vigorous, and successful, but their whole generosity must arise from the caprice of the sovereign. Where the people have no voice, and thus personal emotion cannot enter into the national councils, all must be cold, severe, and selfish. The immediate circumstances of the Continental Cabinets, too, were delicate. The power of France in arms was tremblingly acknowledged; her power in conspiracy was still more tremblingly feared; and where every King was compelled, by heavy losses in the field, and perpetual disaffection among his subjects, to think of the hour when he might be compelled to beg peace on his knees at the footstool of the tyrant Republic; it became a matter of serious consideration, to what extent benevolence to the emigrants of France might be extended. That this consideration would not have been entertained a moment by England, trained by Protestantism to religious toleration and personal charity, is unquestionable. That it was a vulgar, imperfect, and impure policy in the monarchs

of the Continent, is equally unquestionable. For, no nation was ever a loser by its humanity; no national councils were ever bewildered by raising themselves from the misty and earthward speculations of self-interest to the nobler principles that come from above. No national resistance was ever the more withered for throwing its shield across the unfortunate, and gallantly bestriding the fallen in the cause of allegiance and virtue. The general conduct of the Continental sovereigns to the corps of Condé, in this sense, deserved the indignant reprobation of the great orator. Still filling up his powerful outline with a pencil dipt in English sorrows, he holds the history-piece of shame and unmerited suffering up to the eye of Europe.

"In that condition (the exile and confiscation of the leading ranks of this country), what should we think of Sweden, Denmark, or Holland, or whatever power afforded us a churlish and treacherous hospitality, if they should invite us to join the standard of our king, our laws, and our religion; and, after all this, taking advantage of our deplorable situation, were to treat us as the vilest of mercenaries? What would be our sentiments, if, in that miserable service, we were not to be considered either as English, or as Swedes, Dutch, Danes, but as outcasts of the human race? * * * Should we not obtest Heaven, and whatever justice there is yet on earth? *Oppression makes wise men mad: but the distemper is still the mad-*

*ness of the wise, which is better than the sobriety of fools!* The cry is the voice of sacred misery, exalted, not into wild raving, but into the sanctified frenzy of prophecy and inspiration! In that bitterness of soul, in that indignation of suffering virtue, in that exaltation of despair, would not persecuted English loyalty cry out, with an awful, warning voice; and denounce the destruction that waits on monarchs who consider fidelity to them as the most degrading of all vices; who suffer it to be punished as the most abominable of all crimes; and who have no respect but for rebels, traitors, regicides, and furious negro slaves, whose crimes have broken their chains!"

He now remonstrates, with equal and generous vehemence, against the royal impolicy of this desertion. "Would not this warm language of high indignation have more of sound reason in it, more of real affection, more of true attachment, than all the lullabies of flatterers, who would hush monarchs to sleep in the arms of death? Let them be well convinced, that if ever this example should prevail in its full extent, it will have its full operation. While kings stand firm on their base, though under that base there is a sure-wrought mine, there will not be wanting to their levees a single person of those who are attached to their fortune and not to their cause. But hereafter none will support a tottering throne. Some will fly, for fear of being crushed under the ruin, and some will join in making it. * * * This example *we* shall

give, if, instead of adhering to our fellows in a cause which is an honour to us all, we abandon the lawful government and lawful corporate body of France, to hunt for a shameful and ruinous fraternity with this odious usurpation that disgraces the human race. And is their example nothing? It is every thing. Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn in no other. The war is a war against that example. It is *not* a war for Louis XVIII., nor even for the property, virtue, and fidelity of France. It is a war for George III., for Francis II., and for all the dignity, property, honour, virtue, and religion of England, of Germany, and of all nations."

It could scarcely be conceived that the steady opposition given by a man of the eminence of Burke to republicanism, should have escaped the wrath of those whose principles, if they deserve the name, he so triumphantly trampled. The whole body of philosophism and unbelief in England, always eager to tamper with the constitution, and always hostile to monarchy, was furious at the sound of his name; and scarcely a week passed in which some penurious little pamphlet from some bitter polemic was not launched at him; to be, before the week was over, forgotten. But patriotic wrath could speak out in France more fearless of retaliation. One of the orators of the Republic is still on record as exclaiming, "The moment is not yet arrived, in which may be seen at the bar of the Revolutionary Tribunal that Orestes of the British Parliament, the *madman* Burke, the insolent Lord Grenville,

or the plotter Pitt. But the moment *is* arrived in which the public have summoned them to the bar of their opinion. The moment is arrived in which they are consigned to the detestation of all nations, whose anathemas they so richly deserve; scourges of the earth, and vultures preying on the vitals of the people; they have failed not to scatter their crimes and their gold to distract a nation which they despaired of being able to conquer." The orator then proceeds in the true strain of Jacobin justice, "Soon shall they be laid prostrate before the Throne of Liberty, from which they shall rise only to mount the scaffold that awaits them, and to expiate by their deaths the evils in which they have involved the human race."

The "Letters on the Regicide Peace" were welcomed by the empire with acclamation. Their eloquence, ardour, and beauty, were largely acknowledged by the public taste, but the soundness of their views produced the more important effect of conviction upon the public understanding. They satisfied every rational mind of the dishonour and hazard of attempting to form treaties with men profligately ostentatious of a contempt for all good faith, bound by no personal principle, stained with blood shed in violation of all principle, and hourly wreaking the most remorseless vengeance on each other. The "Letters" cheered the national spirit to renewed resistance, and by pointing out the path of honour, proudly and effectually, led it into the path of safety.

A slight, but very impudent transaction, connected

with those papers, occupied the public attention for a moment. A bookseller of the name of Owen, who had published the "Letter to the Duke of Bedford" for the author, had been also intrusted with the MSS. of the "Letters on a Regicide Peace." On his being called on to account for the produce of the former work, he had the effrontery to say that it had been *given* to him. This Burke distinctly contradicted; but after some further dispute, weary of the matter, and unwilling to be seen involved with a fellow of this order, he gave up the question; but, of course, desired him to return the MSS. of the Letters on the Regicide Peace. Owen, having succeeded by his effrontery in one instance, now tried how far he might succeed in another; and actually sent the MSS. to press on his own behoof, in direct defiance of Burke's indignant prohibition. This, however, stretched the expedient too far. An injunction was obtained, and the sale of the work was stopped accordingly. Owen vented his wrath in some impotent scribbling against "Edmund Burke the pensioner."

To those who doubt altogether the power of political foresight, and determine to look upon the great statesman as only the more successful guesser; it is unimportant to remark on the views of Burke as to the nature, results, and even the duration, of the war. But, to those who are anxious to know how far dependence may actually be placed on human sagacity, the operation of that sagacity in his instance, may afford a cheering confidence in the councils of eminent men.

It is observable, that the three leaders evidently adopted three separate lines of opinion with reference to the French war. Fox viewed it, as a partizan—Pitt, as a politician—Burke, as a philosopher. Fox, rash in all his theories, and inflamed by the popular spirit in France, pronounced, that resistance was absurd, and eventually, impossible. Pitt, confident of the resources of England, and relying on the strong self-interest of the continental powers, was satisfied that resistance was not merely politic, but would be triumphant; that the struggle would be brief; and that the bankruptcy of France would extinguish the Revolution. Burke's conceptions differed from those of both; and, as laid down in the Letters on the Regicide Peace, so early as 1796, were these :—That the war would be not only violent, but protracted—that it was essential to ultimate success, that the French territory should *not* be held forth as the object of any partition or spoliation by the Allies;—that it was essential to distinguish, in the allied hostilities, between the Government and the Nation, and to declare against the Jacobin faction, as separate from the people—that it was essential to the conduct of the war to attack France on her own territory, (in the first instance, by giving the aid of a British army to the Vendée)—that it was impolitic to employ troops and fleets in reducing West India islands, while the French factions were suffered to overrun the Continent—and that England, possessing in Great Britain an actual force of 200,000

troops, and in Ireland of 80,000, with an unrivalled navy of 500 ships of war, had but to choose on what part of France she desired to make a resistless impression.

It is evident ftom those data, that Burke saw the future with a clearness, which would have made his councils invaluable to the empire. All the errors of the war arose from a neglect of those views; and all its successes arose from their adoption in its later years. It was only from the time when England directed all her efforts against the territory of France, threw a powerful body of troops upon the Continent, made her militias the nursery of her regular soldiery, and instead of wasting her fleets on sugar island expeditions, employed them to sustain her invasions, that she began to prosper. It was only when, by her example, her Allies adopted the determination to engage France on her own soil, to disclaim all partition, and to declare that the war was *not* against the nation, but against the ambition, perfidy, and tyranny of her Government, that the Allies first learned the true road of the march to Paris.

From this period, Burke's health visibly declined. For some years he had totally retired into the country; and though country life has its pleasures and advantages, yet, for an individual of studious habits, it may be the least conducive to health of body or activity of mind of any that can be selected. Its pleasures are for the sportsmen, its advantages for the farmer.

But, the man of study requires exercise and conversation. The former he can scarcely ever urge himself to seek, and the latter he can as seldom hope to find. It is only in large cities that he can fully indulge in either. The extraordinary labours of his Parliamentary life had tended to shake Burke's constitution; and when the stimulus of the House was lost, and his mind was additionally oppressed by that deep and singular sorrow in which it had been plunged by the death of his son, his whole frame sank into premature infirmity. Party malice was, of course, alive on the occasion; he had driven too many Jacobins into insignificance, and had awed too many of the powerful, to be left to close his momentous and patriotic career in tranquillity. Rumours were spread of his wanderings; until the question was, whether his state was more that of fatuity or frenzy.

This was one of the evils to which his resolution of retirement exposed him. The rumours at length assumed so defined a shape, that his friends in London became anxious; and one of them, a man of consequence, went to Beaconsfield to ascertain the truth. He found Burke looking feeble, but without any deficiency of that ardour and intelligence which so habitually animated him in conversation. In the course of the interview, in which the politeness of the guest had avoided all mention of his object, Burke brought incidentally from his desk some fragments of the "Letters on the Regicide Peace," which he was then writ-

ing. Those, at least, were satisfactory proofs of the surviving vigour of his intellect. Like the great Greek tragedian who was charged with a similar decay, and who, throwing his last work before his judges, gained the day; the great English statesman, altogether unconscious of his friend's purpose, instantly put an end to all doubts of his pre-eminent capacity.

One of the stories which had peculiarly gained credence, was, that he was reduced to such a state of mental alienation, as to wander round his grounds, making harangues to the cattle, and even weeping over them. This exaggeration was found to have been raised on the following natural and affecting circumstance. The horse which his son had generally rode, and which was now growing old, had ever since its master's death been suffered to run loose in the park, and was kept from all kinds of labour. Burke's good-natured habits extended to every thing, and all his cattle were tamed by his kindness. But one day when he was walking, in his usual melancholy musings, he saw the old horse come close to him, look at him for a while, and then quietly lay its head on his bosom. The recollections of his dead son, and the apparent feeling of the poor animal, together overpowered him, and falling on its neck, he burst into a flood of tears.

But common report makes its way through too many channels, to have been excluded from Burke. He knew that he was charged with, at least, political insanity. This he always treated with the lightness it

deserved. "Some part of the world," he said one day to a relative, "the Jacobin part of it, think, or affect to think, that *I* am mad. But believe me, the world, twenty years hence, will, and with reason too, think, from their conduct, that *they* must have been mad." Such is the bitterness of party; or rather, such is its folly. For those rumours were chiefly propagated at the moment when he was giving proofs of his genius, scarcely rivalled by himself; and not merely of his genius, but of his indefatigable research; and not merely of his research, but of that deliberate, full, and profound insight into public affairs; that philosophy of politics, which above all establishes the evidence of intellectual solidity. He had but just before scourged the coxcombry of the Duke of Bedford; and if ever public punishment was inflicted with the dignity of a judge, and the keenness of an executioner, it was in the flagellation of that noble espouser of the "majesty of the people." He was in the act of sending forth to the world the matchless Letters in which all the fires of his mind blazed for a beacon to Europe. The trumpet was at his lips which marshalled the dejected hopes of England, and roused the broken faculties of Continental resistance, to a struggle for the rights of human nature. He was at that moment bringing down in his hand from the Mount and Oracle of moral and political wisdom, covered with clouds and darkness as it was, to every eye but his own, the great principles of national and universal security; and

it was then that the rioters and feasters, the apostates from the legitimate homage, and worshippers of the fabricated, and brute image of French Jacobinism, were loudest in their affected contempt for his mission and understanding.

Yet there were manlier judgments even among his political opposers. A criticism by Sir James Mackintosh, pronounced the "Letters" to be among the most distinguished works even of their author—possessing "the same vast reach and comprehension of view—the same unbounded variety of allusion, illustration, and ornament, drawn from every province of nature and science—the same unrivalled mastery over language—the same happy power of relieving the harshness of political dispute by beautiful effusions of sentiment, and of dignifying composition by grave and lofty maxims of moral and civil wisdom—the same unlimited sway over the human passions, filling us, at his pleasure, with indignation, with horror, or with pity. There is nothing ordinary in his view of a subject. He is, perhaps, of all writers, the one of whom it may be said, with the strictest truth, that no idea appears hackneyed in his hands, no topic seems commonplace, when he treats it. When the subject must, from the narrowness of human conception, which bounds even the genius of Burke, be borrowed, the turn of thought, and the manner of presenting it, are his own. The attitude and drapery are peculiar to the master."

Fox, in all the violence of opposition, had the can-

dour to acknowledge the singular foresight of Burke. He often expressed his wonder at the truth of his predictions in the successive phases of the Revolution and the war. A nobleman of his party was once observing, that Burke's extraordinary declarations on the struggle with France would be looked on by posterity only as the effusions of a brilliant lunatic. Fox replied, that, " whether insane or inspired, fate seemed determined to make him an uncommon political prophet."

One character of his prediction was uniform, and in it he had the further peculiarity of being alone. From the beginning, he pronounced that the war would be desperate, dangerous, and *long*. Fox pronounced that France, having taken up arms only for liberty, would scorn to retain them for conquest. England, for some years, hailed the commencement of every campaign as the last. The sanguine speeches of the most distinguished members of Government almost pledged themselves to immediate national success. The powerful penetration of Burke, avoiding the errors at once of revolutionary confidence, and of precipitate triumph, led his step through the dimness and difficulties of the future. To an observation on the probable success of the negotiations at Lisle, as " the direct step to the close of the Revolution"—" The close of the French Revolution, indeed !" exclaimed Burke. " The Revolution at an end ! Why, sir, it is scarcely begun. As yet you have heard only the first music. You

may see the actors by and by. But neither you nor I can expect to see the fifth act of the play." It is equally remarkable, that he alone pointed to the coming of the shadow which the iniquitous partition of Poland threw over the fortunes of the Continent. Opposition had, of course, made it a theme, and flourished in metaphor on the atrocities of despotism. But Opposition had already rendered itself impotent on the subject, by openly resisting the efforts which Mr Pitt had made to check the grasping ambition of Russia. The resolutions moved by Mr Whitbread, and which were the boast of the party, unquestionably emboldened Russia to commit that act of consummate rapine. If the seizure of Oczakow, whether important or not as a fortress, had been forbidden by a British fleet, on the just plea that it was an infraction of the rights of nations; Russia would never have dared to commit the gigantic and bloody spoliation of Poland. "Hereafter," said Burke, on the march of the Russian armies, "the *world* will have cause to rue this iniquitous measure, and *they* most who *were most concerned in it.*" Vienna twice captured, the long and bitter slavery of Prussia, the ravage of Russia and the conflagration of Moscow, were the avenging answer to the prediction.

His opinions during the progress of the war were equally sound, and at variance with both the Cabinet and Opposition. Fox pronounced peace the only panacea. Pitt pronounced a war of finance the only way

to triumph. Burke pronounced peace with Jacobinism to be ruin, embittered by insult. To the hopes of a war of finance, he loftily replied by asking, where was the bank of the Saracens in their conquests; what was the credit of the paper money of the sands of Arabia? In an incomparable picture of the duties of a great Minister, he calls upon the Government to enlist, not the interests of a class, but the feelings of a nation. "In so holy a cause, it was presumed, that the Minister would have opened all the temples; and with prayer, with fasting, and with supplication, better directed than to the grim Moloch of regicide in France, have called upon us to raise that united cry, which has so often stormed Heaven, and, with a pious violence, forced down blessings upon a repentant people."

He still perseveres in his principle of making the war an appeal to the higher sentiments of the nation, finely saying,—"Never was there a jar or discord between genuine sentiment and policy. Never, no, never, did Nature say one thing and Wisdom another. Nor are sentiments of elevation in themselves turgid and unnatural. Nature is never more truly herself, than in her grandest form. The Apollo Belvidere is as much in nature, as any figure from the pencil of Rembrandt, or any clown in the rustic revels of Teniers. Indeed, it is when a nation is in great difficulties, that minds must exalt themselves to the occasion, or all is lost. Strong passion, under the direction of

a feeble reason, feeds a low fever, which serves only to destroy the body that entertains it. But vehement passion does not always indicate an infirm judgment. It often accompanies, and actuates, and is even auxiliary to a powerful understanding; and when they both act harmoniously, their force is great to destroy disorder within, and to repel injury from abroad. If ever there was a time that calls on us for no vulgar conception of things, and for exertions in no vulgar strain, it is the awful hour that Providence has now appointed to this nation. Every litttle measure is a great error, and every great error will bring on no small ruin."

A feature of all distinguished minds is activity; and Burke's retirement to the country only added another topic of interest to his circle of practical and benevolent studies. Agriculture had long been a favourite contemplation, though it may be presumed that, in his case, as in that of philosophers and scholars in general, the *profits* of farming were not among his rewards; but it gave him a large insight into the condition of the peasantry, whose claims he always vindicated against the selfish clamour of the towns. The threat of a scanty harvest had alarmed the nation, and Parliament teemed with projects of a maximum prices, of wages, &c., and of purchasing grain to be laid up in public granaries. Burke boldly defied the popular delusion. "The cry," said he, "of the people in cities and towns, though, unfortunately, from

a fear of their multitude and combination, the most regarded, ought, in fact, to be the least attended to on this subject; for citizens are in a state of utter ignorance of the means by which they are to be fed, and they contribute little or nothing, except in an infinitely circuitous manner, to their own maintenance. They are '*fruges consumere nati.*' They are to be heard with respect and attention upon matters within their province, that is, on trades and manufactures; but on every thing that relates to agriculture, they are to be listened to with the same reverence which we pay to the dogmas of other ignorant and presumptuous men.

"If any one were to tell them that they were to give in an account of all the stock in their shops; that attempts would be made to limit their profits, or raise the price of the labouring manufacturers upon them; or recommend to Government, out of a capital from the public revenues, to set up a shop of the same commodities, in order to rival and keep them in reasonable dealing; they would very soon see the imprudence, injustice, and oppression of such a course, and they would not be mistaken. * * * * A greater and more ruinous mistake cannot be fallen into, than that the trades of agriculture and grazing can be conducted on any other than the common principles of commerce,—namely, that the producer should be permitted, and even expected, to look to all the possible profit which, without fraud or violence, he can make;

to turn plenty or scarcity to the best advantage he can; to keep back or bring forward his commodities at pleasure; to account to no one for his stock or for his gain. On any other terms, he is the slave of the consumer; and that he should be so, *is of no benefit to the consumer.*"

This rational political economist, rational in a science which, in the hands of our philosophers of the day, is only a grave confusion of ideas, the formality of nonsense, and the wisdom of triflers; ridicules the idea that Government can provide for the popular wants. "The first thing that Government owes to us, the people, is *information;* the second is *coercion;* the one to guide our judgment, the other to regulate our tempers. It can do *very little positive good* in this, or perhaps anything else." On the other hand, no man was more above the popular sycophancy which disfigures the reputation of so many public men; he spoke as plainly to the peasant as to his lord. "The labouring people," said he, "are poor, only because they are numerous. *Numbers, in their nature, imply poverty.* In a fair distribution among a vast multitude, none can have much. That class called the rich is so extremely small, that if all their throats were cut, and a distribution made of all that they consume in a year, *it would not give a bit of bread and cheese for one night's supper to those who labour.*"

He is always contemptuous of the sentimental language adopted in speaking of the lower orders. "The

vigorous and laborious class," said he, "have lately got from the *bon ton* of the humanity of this day the name of the '*labouring poor.*' We have heard many plans for the relief of the '*labouring poor.*' This puling jargon is *not* as innocent as it is foolish. In meddling with great affairs, weakness is never innoxious. Hitherto the name of poor, in the sense in which it is used to excite compassion, has not been used for those who *can*, but for those who *cannot* labour, for the sick and infirm, for orphan infancy, for languishing and decrepit age. But when we affect to pity as poor those who must labour, or the world cannot exist, we are trifling with the condition of mankind. It is the common doom of man that he must eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, that is, by the sweat of his body, or the sweat of his mind. If this toil was inflicted as a curse, it is, as might be expected, from the Father of all blessings,—it is tempered with many alleviations, many comforts. Every attempt to fly from it, and to refuse the very terms of our existence, becomes much more truly a curse, and heavier pains and penalties fall upon those who would elude the task which are put upon them by the great Master of the world. * * * I do not call a healthy young man, cheerful in his mind, and vigorous in his arms, —I cannot call such a man *poor.* I cannot pity my kind, as a kind, merely because they are men. This affected pity only tends to dissatisfy them with their condition, and to teach them to seek resources where

no resources are to be found,—in something else than their own industry, frugality, and sobriety."

The career of this illustrious patriot and philosopher was now about to close. A general feebleness of frame broke him down, and, from the beginning of 1797, his existence was merely a struggle with dissolution. In February, he was carried to Bath, for the benefit of the waters; but they were soon found ineffectual. In a letter to one of his friends at the time, he says, "My health has gone down very rapidly; and I have been brought hither with very faint hopes of life, and enfeebled to such a degree, as those who had known me some time ago would scarcely think credible. Since I came hither, my sufferings have been greatly aggravated, and my little strength still farther reduced; so that, though I am told the symptoms of my disorder begin to carry a more favourable aspect, I pass the far larger part of the tweny-four hours, indeed almost the whole, either in my bed, or lying on the couch from which I dictate this."

A letter to a relative of the Quaker, his early schoolmaster, written the day before he quitted Bath, after all expectations were over, breathes still more the manliness of Christian resignation.—"I feel, as I ought to do, your constant hereditary kindness to me and mine. What you have heard of my illness is far from exaggerated. I am, thank God, alive, and that is all. Hastening to my dissolution, I have to bless Providence that I do not suffer a great deal of pain. * *

* * I have been at Bath these four months to no purpose, and am therefore to be removed to my own house at Beaconsfield to-morrow, to be nearer to a habitation more permanent, *humbly and fearfully hoping that my better part may find a better mansion.*"

He was anxious to die at home, and breathe his last surrounded by the objects and recollections endeared to him through life. To some one, who probably remonstrated with him on taking so long a journey in his condition, he answered, "It is so far at least *on my way to the tomb:* I may as well travel it alive as dead." Public affairs frequently pressed upon his mind. The period was singularly perilous, and might be termed the crisis of the war. In writing of Ireland, he seems to have contemplated the Union, which took place within three years after, and he grounded it upon the nature of circumstances. "There is a great cry against English influence," said he. "I am quite sure that it is Irish *influence* which dreads English habits." The Union was the painful alternative, when Separation was the watchword. A Republican faction convulsed Ireland. It was the hand of revolt which stripped her of the crown. Burke's judgment in this case was decided. "Great Britain would be ruined by the Separation of Ireland. But, as there are degrees even in ruin, it would fall the most heavily on Ireland. By such a Separation, Ireland would be the most completely undone country in the world, the *most wretched*, the *most distracted*,

and, in the end, the *most desolate part of the habitable globe.*"

His councils on English politics were of the same uncompromising spirit which had made his voice as the sound of inspiration to the heart of England. He exhibits, to the last, that high reliance on the power of the empire to continue the conflict; and that unshaken confidence in her achieving final victory, which formed, in the early part of the war, so strong a contrast with the despondency of public men. "Never," exclaims the great patriot, from his deathbed, "*never succumb.* It is a struggle for your existence as a nation. If you must die, die with the sword in your hand. *But I have no fears whatever for the result.* There is a salient, living principle of energy in the public mind of England, which only requires proper direction to enable her to withstand this or any other ferocious foe. *Persevere, therefore, till this tyranny be overpast.*"

He was now visibly dying; but his mind, in the full conviction that his hour was approaching, was still active; and still occupied alike in those fond, and those lofty, interests which had so equally, and so long, occupied his years. He sent messages of remembrance to some peculiarly valued friends, and cleared his account of enmities with the world, by forgiving all. He talked occasionally of his own political course, of his principles, his purposes, and the prospects of the country.

His life had been religious, and its close was unostentatiously Christian. He declared, that he sought the Divine mercy on the grounds and principles of the Christian faith, seeking it only through the blessed Redeemer, "whose intercession," as he himself expressed it, "he had long sought with unfeigned anxiety, and to which he looked with trembling hope." Some of his last moments (July 9, 1797,) were occupied in giving directions relative to his decease, and listening to one of Addison's papers on the Immortality of the Soul. While the paper was reading, he became faint, and desired to be carried to his bed. The servants had taken him in their arms for the purpose, when his breathing became difficult, he uttered an almost inarticulate blessing, and expired.

The public grief for the death of this eminent person was expressed in the strongest language of regret and admiration. His funeral, which took place on the 15th of July, in Beaconsfield Church, where he was laid, by his own direction, in the same grave with his son and brother, was attended by a crowd of individuals of distinction. The pall was borne by Lord Minto, Lord Sidmouth (Speaker), the Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Thomond, Mr Wyndham, and Lord Loughborough (Lord Chancellor). Mr Fox honourably proposed that the burial should take place in Westminster Abbey. The will, however, had declared otherwise.

This will was, itself, a document worthy of the mind of Burke. It commenced with a striking and pious acknowledgment of his faith. "According to the ancient, good, and laudable custom, of which my heart and understanding recognise the propriety, I BEQUEATH MY SOUL TO GOD, HOPING FOR HIS MERCY ONLY THROUGH THE MERITS OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. My body I desire to be buried in the church of Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother, and my dearest son; in all humility praying, that as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have part in the resurrection of the just."

The arrangement of his property was brief. He gave the whole in fee-simple to his widow, with a legacy of L. 1000 to his niece, Mrs Haviland. A plain marble tablet, according to his desire, was erected in Beaconsfield Church, with the inscription, which was completed on the death of Mrs Burke.

Near this place lies interred all
That was mortal of the
Right Honourable EDMUND BURKE,
Who died on the 9th of July, 1797, aged 68 years.
In the same grave are deposited the remains of his only son, Richard Burke, Esq., Representative in Parliament for the Borough of Malton,
Who died the 2d of August, 1794, aged 35;
And of his brother, Richard Burke,
Barrister at Law, and Recorder of the city of Bristol,
Who died on the 4th of February, 1794;
And of his widow, Jane Mary Burke,
Who died on the 2d of April, 1812, aged 78.

Some years previously to her death, Mrs Burke sold the mansion and estate at Beaconsfield, for L. 38,500, reserving the use of the house and grounds during her life, and for one year after. She continued to reside there, much attended to by her husband's friends, until her death.

In her latter years she had suffered from a severe rheumatic attack, which deprived her of the power of taking exercise. At her death L. 5000 were bequeathed to Mrs Haviland, Burke's niece; and the rest of the property, with the library, and the various presents and memorials given to him during his public life, to his nephew, Mr Nugent.*

* By a curious coincidence, even the mansion did not long outlast its owners. It had been let to a clergyman for the purpose of a school, and was accidentally burnt down, April 23, 1813.

THE END.

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